No. 786
Friday
31 Jan. '92

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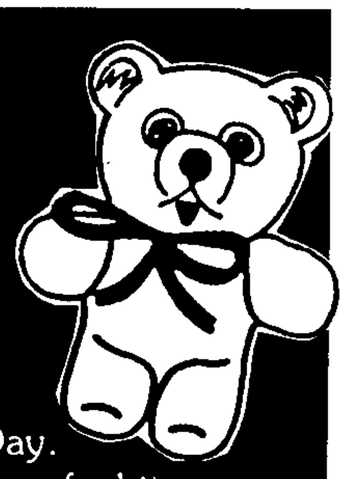

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MACALLAN trounces COGNAC in nightly combat.

IN A RECENT Decanter Magazine tasting of *widely-available* malt whiskies in competition with well-known VSOP cognacs, we are delighted to report that The Macallan 18 year old Single Highland Malt Whisky emerged from the fray as 'favourite after dinner drink'.

'. . . Good round fullness of palate. Excellent malt, lots of character, flavour and length of taste . . .' were typical of the malt and brandy buffs' accolades.

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The Macallan. The Malt.

Gnome

I HAVE always been proud to be the proprietor of the *Absurder* Sunday newspaper and never more so than this week.

When all the other so-called newspapers were running ridiculous smears about the perilous financial state of the Gnomhro Corporation, only the *Absurder* had the real inside story. Continuing their high standards of investigative journalism, the *Absurder* team had managed to get hold of the entire Gnomhro plc 1991 report and accounts *before* they are due out in February. This was a brilliant piece of work, achieved with the help of an anonymous source. The result was their full page scoop GNOMHRO'S BALANCE SHEET LOOKS FANTASTICALLY HEALTHY and the sensational revelation that the Goldmining-to-Liberal-Newspaper Conglomerate made a pre-tax profit of £100 billion last month. This led them to their stunning conclusion that shareholders had made at least £100 million in dividends in the time it took to read the article and should, therefore, leave all their money where it was in Gnomhro for ever.

My congratulations go to the *Absurder* and especially to the Editor, "Pixie" Strobes, for having the courage to put in such a story at full length.

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COLOUR SECTION

BILL WEIR, a senior official at the ministry of defence, insists he is just a "metallurgist". So why would junior defence minister Alan "Bongo Bongo" Clark rush down from the MoD to tell the Commons trade and industry select committee that Bill must not at any cost appear on the telly?

In fact Bill Weir works in what the chairman of Walter Somers, the Midlands engineering firm of Iraqi supergun fame, told the Commons in an unguarded moment was the ministry's "spooks department". It includes MI6 men (like Bill Weir) and some from MI5 (like the two gentlemen who nobbled the ministry's appeals board, thus earning Colin Wallace, the former army information officer, £30,000 compensation (see *Eyes passim*).

In private, away from those nasty cameras, Bill Weir told the select committee that he had had a couple of telephone conversations with Walter Somers in 1989 when the company was building a series of massive guns for Saddam Hussein. On the basis of the calls, Weir couldn't decide for certain whether what was being built was guns or petrochemical pipes, so he didn't do anything further about it.

This is all nonsense. As the committee will discover when it calls Gerard James, former chairman of the arms company Astra, on 5 February, and from Sir Hal Miller, Tory MP for Bromsgrove (if it has the guts to order him to give evidence), the entire intelligence service — MI5 and MI6 — responded enthusiastically to the call from the CIA at the end of the Iran-Iraq war to "do everything we can to help our ally, Saddam Hussein".

This was the main purpose of the 1989 arms fair in Baghdad, which was attended by the military attaché at the British embassy in the city. The attaché now says that he somehow missed the gargantuan supergun which was on display at the fair, and was ordered, in a slightly smaller model, from British companies. But he does not say why he attended an arms fair in a country with whom the British Government was in theory maintaining a strict arms embargo.

There was no embargo, of course: only an encouragement on all sides for arms firms to supply Saddam — and a long string of lies and prevarications ever since.

HUGE were the sighs of relief at the Ministry of Defence when Brian Nelson, the army's agent in the Protestant paramilitaries in Belfast, accepted a deal and pleaded guilty to a few routine conspiracies to assassinate civilians.

The relief reached most newspaper offices, where the matter was dealt with discreetly in a few carefully worded paragraphs.

For the record, the *Eye* has covered the Nelson scandal from his first arrest two years ago. Among the remarkable disclosures made here was the trip Nelson made to South Africa in 1986 to buy arms illegally for Protestant assassins.

This visit was cleared not only by the Ministry of Defence but also by an unnamed government minister. Part of the deal with Nelson was that no mention whatsoever should be made about this visit — or the minister.

THE Government, in the shape of energy secretary John Wakeham, is very determined to attack the coal industry — starting with 1,200 sackings in Yorkshire — even though the general election is imminent.

The anti-coal offensive has been launched by Wakeham and Neil Clarke, the latter appointed as chairman of British Coal a year ago with the task of flogging off the profitable bits. Clarke learnt about running coal mines in South Africa, and together the pair have decided to drive out Malcolm Edwards, BC's commercial director, who has been in the industry for 35 years. In so doing they have achieved the impossible — uniting much of the industry's management, the National Union of Mineworkers and the electricity generators, coal's biggest customers, against them.

Edwards is no radical: he, too, favours privatisation. But he does not want to reduce the industry to a handful of the most profitable pits. He opposes the scheme of N.M. Rothschild, the merchant bank that is advising the Government, whose secret report — widely leaked — says the industry would have to be reduced from 55 pits to the most attractive 12 or 14 if it were to appeal to investors and speculators. Edwards has been ordered not to talk about the matter.

The prestigious newsletter *International Coal Report* has accused British Coal of "badmouthing" Edwards with whispers to the press that it had "no confidence in his commitment to the company".

The newsletter also says German coal is twice as expensive as British but the Germans have permission from Brussels to subsidise their product. Edwards went to Brussels to find out why Britain could not do the same and was told that we had used our subsidy on the nuclear levy. (This allows the Government to deduct £1,200 million from the payments made by electricity consumers and give it as a "Non Fossil Fuel" subsidy to Nuclear Electric.) Edwards argues that this means coal is subsidising nuclear power.

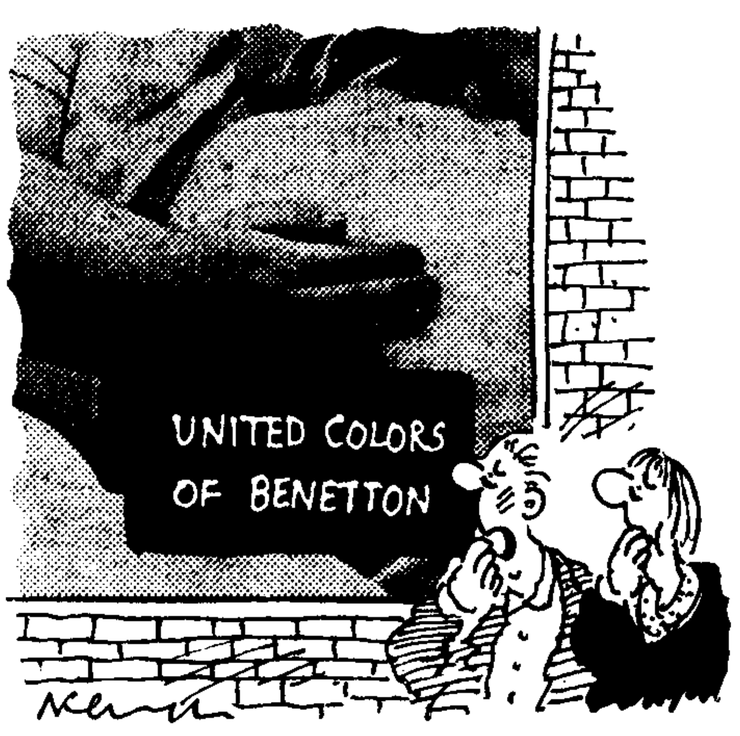
Says *ICR*: "Much to Wakeham's embarrassment, Edwards won considerable support for his efforts in Brussels where officials appear to be dismayed that the European coal industry is being dismantled from its most profitable end — the coal produced in British pits."

Edwards protested at the nuclear levy and said if the same amount were paid to British Coal for each unit of electricity it produced, it could offer National Power free coal with free delivery plus a bonus of £10 a ton.

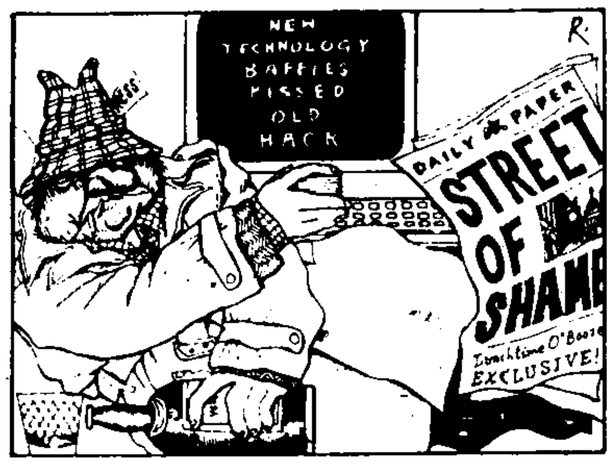
Edwards' lawyers are currently discussing his departure terms.

None of this will move Wakeham, who appoints British Coal directors. He is determined to reduce the coal industry and press ahead with the sackings.

● *More news 'IN THE BACK' – p. 28.*



"I'm suffering from ads"



SIR JAMS Goldsmith's hostility to anti-semitism is well-known. So he may not be best pleased to learn that the lawyer Peter Carter-Fuck, who administers a libel "fighting fund" on his behalf, is now working for a Jew-baiter.

Carter-Fuck's new client is none other than the Croatian president Franjo Tudjman, who has hired the great libel lawyer to sue the *Guardian* for a feature it published last October. The article, by Richard West, quoted from Tudjman's book *Wastelands: Historical Truth*, which attempts to justify Hitler's policy towards the Jews during World War II.

The book digs into the Old Testament to prove that, for the Jews, "genocidal violence is a natural phenomenon... it is not only allowed, but even recommended". Tudjman adds: "The establishment of Hitler's new European order could be justified by the need both to remove the Jews (undesirable more or less in all European countries) and to correct the French-British wrongs of the Versailles system."

The *Grauniad* is taking a robust line, telling Carter-Fuck that it will see him and his client in court where, if necessary, the paper will produce further evidence of Tudjman's anti-semitism. Carter-Fuck has yet to reply.

Tudjman is the first politician from the former Communist countries to succumb to the lure of British libel law. How did he hear about it? It is no doubt purely coincidental that last summer he enjoyed several discussions about the future of Croation newspapers with the late Robert Maxwell.

AN ATTACK on the *Grauniad* in the dummy issue of an underground magazine called *Casablanca* has had some astonishing consequences.

As reported in *Eye* 783, the anonymous article accused editor Peter Preston of betraying the paper's liberal-leftish conscience. It complained that hacks such as Jonathan Fenby and the veteran anarcho-spartist Richard Gott were being sidelined to make way for witless yuppies. It savaged the showbiz-obsessed *Weekend Guardian* supplement and denounced the features editor, Alan Rusbridger, for filling his pages with right-wing pundits such as Norman Stone.

You might think an attack in an obscure magazine — a magazine, indeed, that doesn't yet exist — could be shrugged off easily enough. But not so, it seems.

Soon after the dummy issue of *Casablanca* appeared, Richard Gott was rescued from the wilderness and elevated to the post of literary editor. Then Jonathan Fenby was put in charge of a new, serious Saturday supplement. And Alan Rusbridger, the features editor accused of shunning left-wingers, rang Paul Foot of the *Daily Mirror* and begged him to write a weekly column.

"BRUTE" Anderson, John Major's man at the *Sunday Express*, is still being pursued over a debt he incurred while working as a columnist for the *Sunday Torygraph*.

The debt arose when Anderson was obliged to work late on his column one Friday. Running late for his scheduled appearance on Radio 4's *Any Questions*, he commandeered a helicopter to ferry him to the recording location in Cornwall, inviting the helicopter company, McAlpine Aviation, to charge his employers directly.

Anderson then tried to claim the cost of the flight — around £3,000 — as part of his expenses allowance, but the *Sunday Torygraph* would have none of this.

Since he arrived at the *Sunday Express* (having been sacked from the *Torygraph*), debt collectors have been calling at the paper's offices seeking payment from "Brute", who can hardly claim penury as an excuse. In addition to his substantial salary for writing out Conservative Central Office press releases, Anderson, along with a handful of other *Torygraph* hacks, was recently left £1,000 in an old lady's will.

ON 8 JANUARY, with Sir David Fester away on holiday and deputy editor Jonathan Holborow off sick, the *Daily Mail* was left under the command of "Mad" Rod Gilchrist, Fester's number three.

Rodders swiftly set about living up to his nickname. Glancing at a proof of the following morning's books page, he suddenly went white and pointed with shaking hand at a review of a new biography of Stephen Hawking, which was accompanied by a photo of the wheelchair-bound scientist.

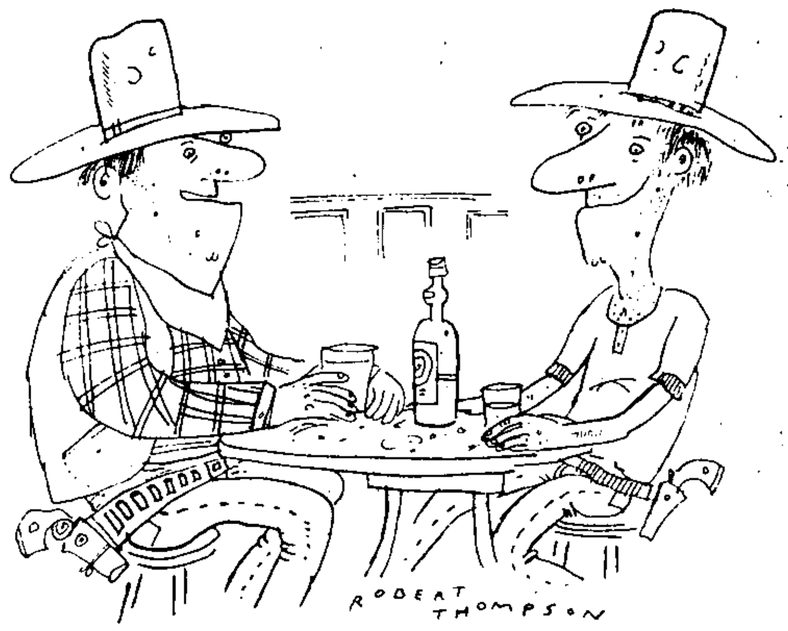
"I'm not having cripplies in my paper," the acting editor screamed.

It was too late to pull the offending picture and review from the first edition; but in later editions all traces of Hawking were successfully removed. The space thus created was filled with a large photograph of General de Gaulle.

OAFISH editor of the London *Evening Standard* Paul Dacre (the man who employs the World's Worst Columnist, Peter McLie), has recently been given a lesson in sexual politics by female members of staff.

Dacre expects unremitting devotion from his subordinates and refuses to tolerate, for example, any time off for illness on the part of his secretary. One day when she called in sick, he told her he was sending his chauffeur-driven car to collect her and if she failed to turn up she would be sacked. (His stock response to a claim that someone is sick is to declare: "We're all sick" — a remark which in his case may very well be true.)

On another occasion his secretary wore trousers to work. This offended Dacre's notion of proper attire for working women and he insisted that in future she should wear a skirt. This infuriated the paper's female staff who the following day, led by sale room correspondent Pat Miller, all turned up in trousers. Even deputy editor Genevieve Cooper arrived sporting a pair of pantaloons, these in the fashion of Rupert Bear. The unfortunate Pat Miller, however, has since been made redundant.



"I don't know about you, but I could murder an Indian"

EVE Pollard, editor of the *Sunday Express*, seems to be getting ideas above her station.

She has filed an amendment to the entry at Companies House for Faithmist Ltd, an off-the-shelf firm she uses as a vehicle for some of her earnings, whose two directors are herself and her husband, *Daily Express* editor Nick Lloyd.

According to the return she recently submitted and signed, the directors have now changed their names to "Lady Lloyd" and "Lord Lloyd". This will no doubt come as news to the Queen, who has so far only given Nick a knighthood.

One can only hope that Lord Stevens of Ludgate, who pays La Bollard rather a large salary to edit a newspaper, doesn't see the Faithmist return. For Eve gives her occupation on it as "TV presenter".

THE RECENT case of Connery v. News Group Newspapers, in which actor Jason Connery was awarded £35,000 damages against the *Sun* and Miss Lesley-Ann Jones, was something of a let-down for the plaintiff and his lawyers, despite bullish talk about vindicating his good name, etc.

The Sun had published what it claimed were verbatim quotes from an interview with Connery (it had been conducted by a freelance, Lesley-Ann Jones, for another publication; but *The Sun* had bought certain passages for publication). These quotes had suggested that Connery was frightened of being called up to serve in the Gulf.

Connery claimed he had never uttered these words and, unfortunately for *The Sun*, Jones had since wiped her tape-recording of the conversation. She was able to provide a rough transcript, which she claimed to have written on the day it took place. However, in the absence of any recording or formal transcript, it was a matter of Connery's word against hers.

Connery's counsel, the famous George Carman QC, exuded indignation on behalf of his client, but became typically thuggish when cross-examining Jones, an unmarried mother. Not content with attempting to undermine her evidence about the interview, he also attacked her private life, inquiring pointedly whether she had known the father of her child for very long.

The judge instructed the jury that under the law, if they felt the scales were evenly balanced on the evidence, they must nonetheless find for the plaintiff as it is up to the defendant to prove his case. Connery's solicitor, Keith "Rottweiler" Schilling, was predicting the jury would come in with a very large award, in the hundreds of thousands. Alas, this was not quite the case.

CONRAD Black's new *inamorata*, the reactionary glamourpuss Barbara Amiel, has been paid a handsome tribute by the paper she used to edit and for which she still writes a column, the *Toronto Sun*.

"She is to human beings what cats are to the animal world — sleek and smart and self-absorbed and smug-seeming and sexy," drools *Sun* hackette Christie Blatchford.

"Almost everyone," Blatchford adds, "remembers watching her walk from her office to the library at the other end of the newsroom. City editor Jane Van Der Voort remembers her doing the walk in an open trenchcoat, under which could clearly be seen a black bustier, garter belt and stockings."

GOVERNMENT-appointed regulators of the privatised monopolies — OFWAT, OFTEL, OFGAS and OFFER — have made two staggering discoveries: there are more gas, water, electricity and telephone users on the electoral register than there are shareholders — and there's an election coming up.

How else to explain their sudden decision that now is the time to try to reduce the damage done by privatisation?

OFGAS led the way by telling British Gas to reduce its share of the industrial market from 90 percent to 40, and to hive off its pipelines as a separate business to open the way for competitors.

While British Gas tried to link this with a deal allowing it to raise domestic prices (it was given a face-saving "assurance" by John Wakeham, the energy secretary, that OFGAS would review the price control system covering domestic customers), OFGAS retorted that "there can be no question" of domestic prices being allowed to rise as a result of the deal favouring industry.

OFWAT, meanwhile, is trying to force the water industry to cut down its return on capital and the dividends it pays, and instead to borrow more if it needs money. OFWAT's director, Ian Byatt, has said the industry should stop speculating by buying into other activities and use its money to clean up the stinking water we have to drink.

OFTEL, for its part, is about to issue a "consultative document" aimed at reducing British Telecom's obscene — and politically embarrassing — profits. The document is likely to suggest that BT's pricing structure be changed, restricting its increases in charges to a level equivalent to the retail price index minus 6.25 percent. (The Advertising Standards Authority has also told BT to stop telling lies in its advertisements.)

And, just for good measure, voters — sorry, electricity consumers — will be interested to note that OFFER has told NatPowerGen to stop using its "dominant" position to manipulate the pool price for electricity (see last *Eye*).

LABOUR's latest tax cock-up has echoes of the 1987 disaster.

After Kinnochio's famous dinner at Luigi's a fortnight ago, the *Financial Times* reported that Labour would now "phase in" its proposed rises in national insurance contributions. As soon as he saw the first edition of the *FT*, late on Wednesday night, however, Labour's communications director David Hill had to storm round the press gallery trying to "clarify" the story.

This resulted in BBC hack Nick Jones running a story on Thursday's *Today* programme, quoting from Hill's briefing that "phasing in" was indeed now the policy — possibly. It was not guaranteed. Poor old John Smith then had to go on radio and TV to "clarify" Hill's "clarification".

Should Labour MPs be surprised? One of the causes of Labour's defeat in 1987 was a similar cock-up over tax policy by Roy Hattersley, then the shadow chancellor, the week before the election. Hattersley's main aide and adviser at the time was... David Hill.

IT NOW LOOKS as if the Labour Party has finally begun to appreciate what a 9 percent hike in national insurance contributions will mean:

- The marginal rate of tax (including NIC) for those earning £390 a week will rise to 34 percent, compared with 33 percent basic rate income tax in 1978, the last year of the last Labour government.
- The 9 percent NIC hike will remove from taxpayers in the £390-£590 a week range with a £40,000 mortgage all the "savings" they have gained from recent reductions in mortgage interest rates.
- Although 88 percent of all taxpayers will not be immediately affected by Labour's tax policy, perhaps as many as 10 percent will feel threatened because they aspire to earn more than £390 a week. If you add in this group, you have almost a quarter of the whole electorate.
- There is logic in the present "cut-off" point for NIC at £390 a week because that is also the "cut-off" point for the pension benefits payable under SERPS, the earnings-related pension scheme that boosts the basic rate pension.

ONE CAN HAVE nothing but sympathy for Philip Wood, the ambitious under secretary at the transport department who has been so cruelly fated to take charge of that total non-starter, rail privatisation.

Wood has already produced seven drafts of a white paper — it was supposed to have been published before Christmas — but none has found favour with his political masters.

This is hardly surprising. *All* the various rail privatisation schemes have been condemned, in one way or another, by the hordes of accountants, merchant bankers and management consultants who have so profitably studied the subject over the past five years.

THE Government is being rather economical with the truth in discussing Britain's extensive arms trade in recent years with the hardline Suharto regime in Indonesia.

MPs' written questions have been flooding in since the bloody Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor in November. For the most part they have been answered evasively, with ministers hiding behind the dual fig-leaf of commercial confidentiality and it not being "normal practice" to disclose details of UK defence sales to "particular countries".

Even when the mask has slipped, the facts drip-fed out have been extremely selective.

On 20 January, Foreign Office minister Mark Lennox-Boyd volunteered that Britain had sold "obsolete" Tribal class frigates to Indonesia "in the early 1980s". Strangely, he omitted to mention that the three vessels were refitted by Vosper Thorneycroft at a cost estimated by the *Financial Times* at $40m. Equipment carried by the ships includes Sea Cat missile-launchers, Marconi radar and a Westland Wasp helicopter, according to *Jane's Fighting Ships*.

In similar vein, Lord Cavendish of Furness, a government spokesman, informed the House of Lords that exports of defence equipment to Indonesia were currently "extremely modest", amounting to less than £3.5m in 1991. He might have added that that would bring Britain's export total since Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 to more than $850m.

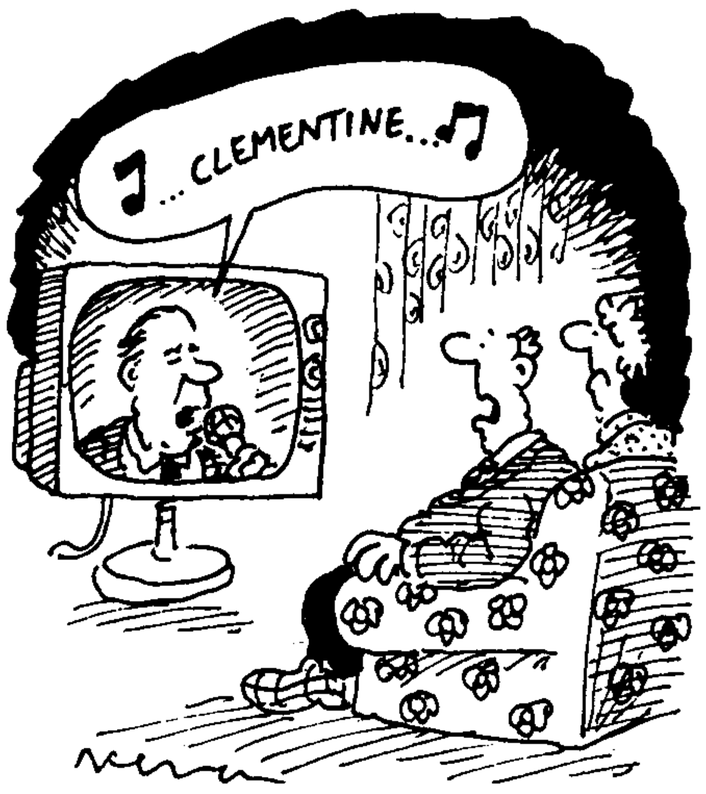
The peak years for the Anglo-Indonesia arms trade were 1985-88, when Britain supplied more than 50 percent of Indonesia's $1.39 billion of weapons purchases. Major British weapons in Indonesian hands include British Aerospace Hawk jet trainers, Rapier surface-to-air missiles, a Hecla class patrol ship and Sea Cat ship-to-air missiles — none of which is yet "obsolete".

DAVID KNOX, the wetter-than-thou Tory MP for Staffordshire Moorlands, looks set to face an independent Conservative challenge at the election thanks to his almost Delorsian support for greater European unity.

Knox, who numbers the vice-presidency of the all-party group for world government among his more obscure portfolios, has also angered the party faithful who farm the sheep-infested Staffs hills by continuing to refuse to reveal how he voted during the Thatch-Tarzan leadership ballot and subsequent re-run.

Local rebels, led by balding former Young Conservative chairman Mike Howson, are now urging fellow Tories to abstain at the election. Indeed, the ambitious Howson has even resigned from Staffs Tories and formed the absurdly-acronymed Conservatives Against A Federal Europe pressure group, CAFE to nobble Knox.

Fears that Knox may allow a once rock-solid 13,000-odd majority to collapse at the election will be compounded if a candidate more in keeping with acceptable (ie Thatcherite) views stands and splits the Tory vote.



"This isn't going to go down well with the Orangemen"

Interestingly enough, opposition is led by Staffordshire Liberal Democrat councillor Christina Jebb, well-known to *Eye* readers as the woman who lifted the lid on the Labour-controlled council's brutal pin-down system (*Eyes passim*) and likely to pick up much support from Tories unimpressed with their own councillors' failure to criticise pin-down.

MORE OF Denis MacShane, who has been half-heartedly denying that he is to be awarded the grace-and-favour seat of Coventry South East to replace the expelled Spartist MP Dave Nellist (see *Eye* 783).

Denis has written an article in *The Grauniad*'s weekend supplement — and not on one of his usual subjects (up the Common Market, up the Pope). It was a human interest story about the family of a British soldier killed by US "friendly fire" in the Gulf.

Why should such a subject grab the attention of an official of the International Metalworkers' Federation who lives and works in Geneva? It couldn't be, could it, that the family concerned lives in Coventry?

MPs HAVE been enjoying the new facilities at the Living Well Health Club at 4 Millbank (the Beeb's parliamentary unit has just relocated to the same building), where an informal atmosphere prevails and MPs are called by their first names.

Only two have taken umbrage at this rudeness and demanded that they be addressed properly. They are *Mr* Cecil Parkinson and *Dr* David Owen.

The vanity of the latter has been much in evidence of late. When Dr Death was due to be interviewed by BBC hackette Sarah Eldridge, who is a little over five feet in height, he was very anxious that their pairing might spoil his sightlines on camera.

Death declared that Ms Eldridge was far too short and insisted another reporter be found to conduct the interview.

THE Scottish Nationalist Party seems to have developed a bizzare sense of humour. Its choice of candidate to fight the Glasgow Provan constituency against the sitting Labour MP Jimmy "I.R." Wray is rather exotic. He/she is a transexual solicitor who has previously stood in election contests as a man.

Not only is Wray a son of the Gorbals, but the Provan constituency contains Easterhouse, one of the roughest, toughest districts in all Glasgee. Wray cannot believe his luck. "If she falls down she'll need to get up herself," he has said. "It's not me. I'm quite liberal. But some of my supporters... I'll need to keep them in chains."

'Backbiter'

Grovel

I HEAR that Professor Norman Stone, the ubiquitous right-wing pundit, has been banned for life from the Turf Tavern in Oxford because of his lager-loutish behaviour.

A spokeswoman for the pub's owners, Whitbread, tells me: "We support the decision of the manager, whose action would have been the same in a similar situation involving any member of the public. He was acting in the best interests of his customers and staff."

Prof Stone is, of course, a trustee of the Thatcher Foundation.

I WITNESS a disgusting scene at the Groucho Club which results in the banning of club member and *Oldie* contributor, Dan Farson.

Farson is stupendously tired and emotional as is his custom; but this time he has difficulty keeping his trousers secured around his waist. They drop to his knees in the bar a few times, and then in the foyer one of the resourceful manageresses is to be seen valiantly grappling with Farson's blancmange-like person, securing the trousers with a length of string.

As a result of this unseemly behaviour, Farson is banned from the club, but in tones of outrage he writes to the long-suffering manager Liam Carson accusing him of homophobia and threatening legal action.

NIGEL Pratt-Dumpster, the famous social climber, is at it again, I see: sucking up to Britain's bed-hopping knobs and minor "royalty".

Indeed, the lead "story" in his pisspoor *Daily Mail* diary of 17 January shows that his desire to lick the jackboots of the likes of Princess Michael of Kent is altogether stronger than his commitment to the truth.

Pratt-Dumpster wrote that Princess Pushy had two causes for celebration: not only was she recovering well from her hunting injury, but her latest book, *Cupid And The King*, "has been consistently on the bestseller lists" since its publication last November.

This is of course tosh. Bookwatch, the firm that compiles the *Sunday Times* bestseller list, confirmed to the *Eye* last week that *Cupid And The King* had not appeared on the list once!

I AM VERY worried about the health of President George Bush. His thyroid problems, which may induce over-sensitivity and paranoia, are already well known; but now his wife Barbara confides to me that the most powerful man on earth regularly doses himself up with halcion while on foreign "trips".

Halcion, of course, is the sleeping drug banned in Britain following reports that it could induce psychosis and paranoia. Doctors are unsure if it could also induce the sort of intestinal upset that had George regurgitating his sushi into the lap of the Japanese prime minister on his recent visit to Tokyo.

All this begins to make J. Danforth Quayle look like a very healthy alternative indeed.

Pseuds Corner

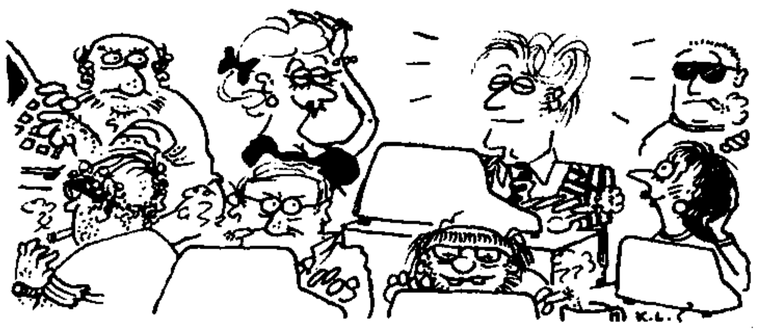
"It's a very personal play," says [Trevor] Griffiths [of *The Gulf Between Us*]. "I nearly went crazy during the Gulf war. It was the deepest and sickest folly — at least as unnecessary as the attack on Dresden [in the Second World War]. When I started writing this play, I didn't know if I could handle the feelings I had to suppress. I got to a point in the second act, I reached a certain scene and a certain revelation, and I turned away from the desk — it was about 3am — and I just stared at this white wall and wept for 40 minutes. I didn't feel any political, moral or social obligation to say something. It was an enjoined play, a play that I had to write for my reasons — I suppose, in a way, to keep faith with myself."

Independent

What souvenir would you bring home?

I shall discover an exquisite carving of a woman giving birth. It would date, perhaps, from the 7th century, after the fall of Epidaurus, when refugees first founded Dubrovnik. It would join my collection of birth sculptures.

SHEILA KITZINGER
Weekend Times



It's impossible to miss him in the sea of wintry heads that nod and sway across the expanse of the editorial floor.

Adam Faith's artfully tousled head shimmers like the golden dome of Samarkand.

VICTOR DAVIS
Mail on Sunday

I once found myself during a holiday outside [Francis] Poulenc's country house at Noizay by the Loire and had fantasies of presenting myself as a devotee, enquiring about surviving manuscripts, asking to search in attics. Perhaps there were at least some sketches for the Bassoon Sonata? Perhaps he hadn't after all (believing rightly that his talent lay in writing for voice and wind) thrown his String Quartet in disgust into the Seine? No, in my timidity I had to content myself with drinking the local chalky Chenin blanc with its elusive sweetness, so like his music (he was proud of his own Noizay vintage). Even at the moment of writing this I am drinking in his homage the nearest thing to it (a sparkling Vouvray) and listening to the superb CD performances by Pascal Rogé of the complete piano music. It's a sensuous indulgence that I hope may for once be allowed to an acolyte of the *sec*.

JOHN FULLER
Independent Magazine

I can't bear men who wear jewellery and I hate watches on anybody at night. The late Fulco Verdura, the great Sicilian jeweller, used to say that no gentleman should wear a wristwatch in the evening. I keep mine in my pocket.

NICKY HASLAM
Sunday Times

CONTRIBUTORS: P.J. Mackie, Guy Kekwick, Janice James, Phil Sullivan, John Martin.

£10 paid for entries

"Hello, we've just moved in next door. Can you lend us £5,000?"

● *ONE of the few public figures who still has a good word for Robert Maxwell, I notice, is the theatrical impresario Thelma Holt. Even after the truth about the pension funds had come out, she wrote in the Daily Telegraph that "There was no one I would rather have been in a trench with".*

Cap'n Bob is in good company. In April 1990 Thelma Holt joined a band of distinguished people to sing the praises of Gerry Healy, the thug and rapist who was for many years the undisputed king of the Workers' Revolutionary Party. Thelma told the meeting of a cup of tea she once had with Healy which had lifted the burden of worry from her shoulders. "I miss him terribly," she sobbed.

THE Princess of Wales's amusing sibling, Viscount Althorp, tells me he fears for the safety of his brother-in-law, Christopher Lockwood, a foreign correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*.

At a London party not long ago, the diminutive Lockwood was introduced to Zoe Heller, the poutsome hackette who wrote the screenplay for Patsy Kensit's recent film *Twenty One*. So engrossed was she by Lockwood that, when she had to answer a call of nature, she asked him to follow her into the bathroom so they could continue their conversation while she peed.

Alas! On emerging from the loo Ms Heller walked straight into her live-in lover, the rugby-playing poet Mick Imlah. Lockwood, the original seven-stone weakling, tried to creep past unnoticed — but was instantly spotted and pursued by the hefty Imlah. Poor Lockwood has now gone into hiding.

● *TO ASPEN, Colorado, where the Killer Bimbo season is in full swing and gossip about Lord White's arrest for allegedly assaulting his live-in bim, Victoria Tucker, is still hot.*

One interested and very interesting party yet to give his version publicly of the curious events is Tom O'Gara. He owns an armoured car maker in Cincinatti and is a long-time friend of the would-be Lady White, who is said to enjoy his company both on land and sea.

While not as rich as "Slugger", Mr O'Gara is some 20 years younger. Doubtless O'Gara, who was in Aspen to provide a helping hand, has fully confirmed to the local police how the confused Victoria, who subsequently retracted her allegation, received her injuries not from White — who vehemently denies any assault — but while skiing.

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

I REALLY can't do better than to quote the good old Victorian Society: "How to wreck a church and waste public money." The case in point is the Roman Catholic church of St Francis in Gorton, an inner-suburb of Manchester.

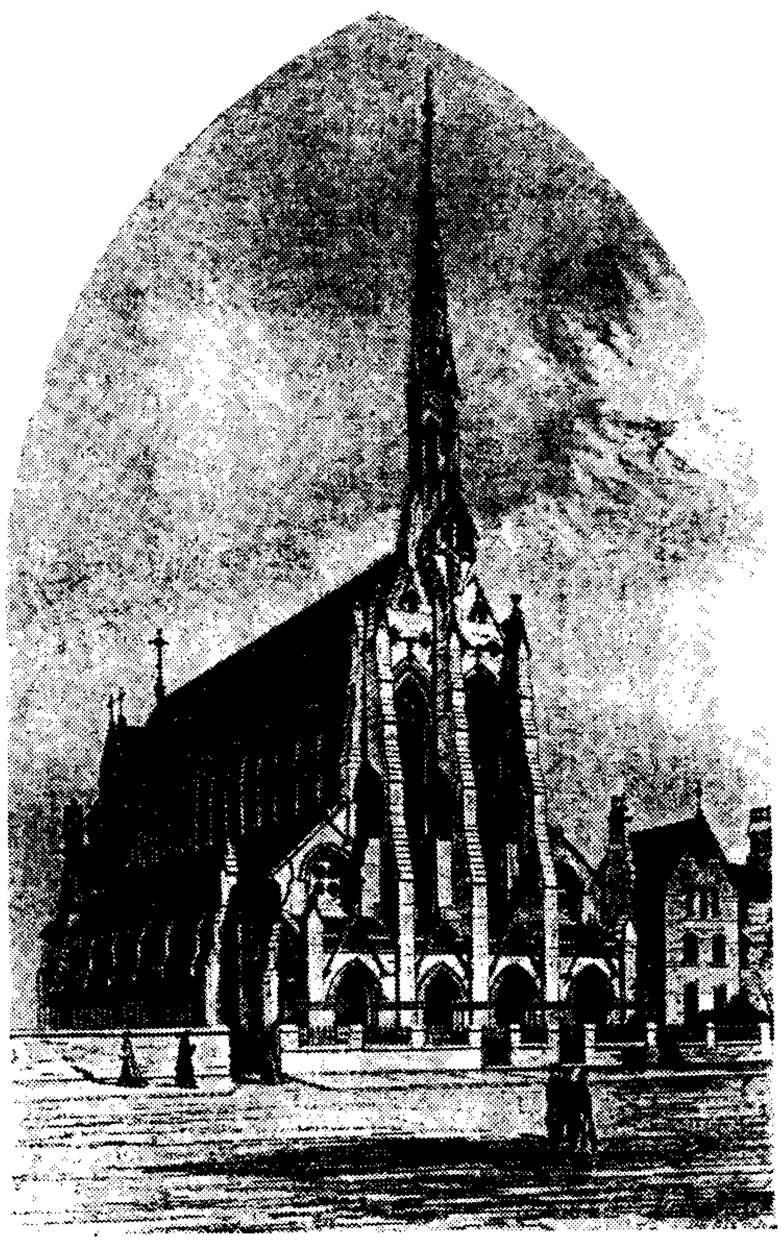
This towering and extravagantly spiky pile, full of rumbustious High Victorian mannerisms, is the masterpiece of Edward Welby Pugin, son of A.W.N. Pugin of Houses of Parliament fame and even more (congenitally?...) mad than his dad. This church was built in 1866-72 for the Franciscans who, in 1985-87, repaired the tall roof with the help of £63,040 from English Heritage and additional grant aid from Greater Manchester council.

It could not last, of course. For any religious order or institution to care for an historic building is so unusual in these days of outreach and social concern that it must be regarded as an aberration. Despite the fact that their Father Provincial gave the standard undertaking that "the building will remain in regular use for worship for the foreseeable future" when applying for this grant aid, the Franciscans soon came back into line and, in 1989, announced that they were giving it up.

At about the same time, the Jesuits threw in the towel at the church of the Holy Name opposite Manchester University. In both cases, the orders hoped that the Bishop of Salford would take over these Victorian buildings as parish churches; but the good Bishop — who simply *loathes* the idea of his flock worshipping in beautiful buildings — did not oblige. So while the Jesuits are still in the Holy Name (purely to stop Opus Dei buying it), the Franciscans sold their church and friary to Zodeco Homes for £75,000.

A tidy profit — thanks to us taxpayers. English Heritage tried to get the money back, but found the "claw-back clause" regarding the sale of recently grant-aided buildings did not apply to churches (a disgraceful loophole, now closed). In February 1991, Manchester city council granted listed building consent to convert St Francis's into seven floors of flats, so utterly wrecking its remarkably unspoiled interior. A local authority is obliged to notify the Department of the Environment of applications regarding Grade I and II buildings, but in this case — owing to the indolence of English Heritage — St Francis's has not been upgraded from Grade II as it deserves and as the grant of financial aid demonstrated.

Worse was to come. English Heritage asked for this case to be called in and aided at a public inquiry, but the DoE declined to take the advice of its statutorily established advisers on historic buildings matters. It argued that the legal case over St Francis's was weak: because Manchester city council — which was also obliged to notify the DoE of cases where a building has received grant-aid and which is terrified of having to compensate the developer if planning permission is rescinded — argues that it never received official notification of the grant to St Francis's. Absurd though it may seem, this may be true: although English Heritage is now stuffed with bureaucrats, they both fail to send out letters and lose incoming ones — like those from the Victorian Society warning of what was happening in Gorton.



S. Francis, Gorton, 1863 Architect: E. W. Pugin

But the DoE's other defence of its supine acquiescence is ridiculous: "It would not have been possible for us to say categorically that we would certainly have accepted English Heritage's advice to call in the listed building consent application." So the real scandal is not just the waste of public money; it is also the growing destructive divide between the two official bodies responsible for protecting historic buildings: EH and the DoE. Look what you have done, Mr Heseltine!

ANOTHER recipient of public money is Elizabeth Esteve-Coll and the great national art museum over whose shameful decline she has presided.

After secret discussions and without consultation with its users, Esteve-Coll has announced that the National Art Slide Library, housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum, will close in April — gravely inconveniencing the freelance lecturers and other teachers who depend on it.

Her predecessor as director, the ineffable Dr Sir Roy Strong, also tried to close this civilized amenity; now, this barbarous end is likely to be achieved by arguing that, after an 18-month closure to "review" the collection, it will be "transferred" to the Leicester Polytechnic.

Never mind that Leicester is far away from London, that 80 percent of the borrowers come to the V&A in person, that it is inconvenient and time-consuming to order slides by post and difficult to choose the best image without direct access; never mind that closure of the National Art Slide Library undermines the serious educational purpose for which the South Kensington museum was established to fulfil and that other institutions in London cannot fill the breach: Mrs Esteve-Coll has her reasons. She clearly believes the archive will be in good hands: the head of information and library services at Leicester Polytechnic, Professor Mel Collier, is a good friend of hers.

'Piloti'

Sally Deedes

FOLLOWING the report in the last *Eye*, the Crown Estate, one of Britain's biggest landlords, continues to try to raise its rents into the mega-sphere, forcing long-standing and elderly tenants out of their homes.

The huge rent rises (in some cases from £1,650 a year to £23,000) are on the Regent's Park Estate in the London borough of Camden. When a tenant does move out, the Crown Estate can of course flog off the lease for a tidy sum: it has recently been advertising empty properties on the estate and one with a 56-year lease carried a modest £550,000 price tag.

However, in forcing tenants to "pay up or move out", it would appear that there is a general misunderstanding of the Rent Act, which was brought in in 1977 to stop just such Rachmann-like practices.

When a lease comes to an end in a Crown Estate property, the tenant is given notice of the new rent rise assessed by Camden's fair rent officer. Over the last four years he has assessed nine cases, raising the rents in some instances by more than 1,000 percent. But this has not been enough for the avaricious Crown Estate which has — as is its right — appealed to the Rent Assessment Committee. (This, incidentally, is *not*, as we said, a Crown Estate panel but an independent body).

In all but one of the cases, the committee has raised rents still further, citing as justification a "registered" rent of £36,000 per year on one of the houses on the estate. This is misleading, however, because that particular rent has never been paid: the incoming tenant renegotiated the lease and instead paid a hefty premium to the Crown Estate, plus repair costs. Nevertheless, the figure of £36,000 remains on the register and is cited as a benchmark.

In counsel's opinion, citing this figure when fixing other rents means that the rent assessment committee has completely disregarded the Rent Act.

Under the heading Registration of Rents Sec 70 (Determination of a Fair Rent), the act states: "Regard shall be had to all the circumstances, in particular the age, character and state of repair of the house." Many of the Crown Estate houses are in need of extensive renovation, but this, it seems, is ignored when it comes to fixing the rent; and nor is any mention made of the full repairing covenant that tenants have to sign along with their leases, committing them to a huge periodic expenditure that can sometimes reach six figures.

Also of interest is Sec 70 (2), which reads: "For the purposes of the determination it shall be assumed that the number of persons seeking to become tenants of similar dwelling houses in the locality on the terms (other than those relating to rent) of the regulated tenancy is not substantially greater than the number of such dwelling-houses in the locality which are available for letting on such terms."

In English, this means that market forces should *not* apply when fixing a "fair rent", which would seem to negate the power of the assessment committee to set such exorbitant rents.

While Regent's Park tenants take their case to the ombudsman, the already hugely rich Crown Estate no doubt hopes that it will soon be laughing all the way to the bank.

Sporting Life

THESE ARE stressful times for racing hacks: almost the entire racing staff of the *Sun* has been sacked, which means much loved household names like Derek "The Beard" Mitchell and Ben Newton may never see the inside of a press room or a bookies' hospitality suite ever again.

Their jobs and expense accounts have been cruelly sacrificed in the name of economy and because it appears that their bosses at News International were no longer satisfied they were giving value for money. Only the clearly irreplaceable Claude Duval of the Old Gang remains, along with a solitary sub-editor who will continue to put the finishing gloss on Claude's characteristically sensitive and densely argued copy.

From now on the *Sun's* daily selections and form recommendations will be supplied by a computer tipping service in Hull. It may be much less expensive for NI, but it sets an alarming precedent for the hacks. How many more will be killed off and replaced by a machine? Will such famous bylines as the *Mirror*'s "Bouverie" and "Newsboy" go the way of the *Sun*'s "Templegate", to be replaced by the hugely charismatic "Computer Specialist" and "Software Kid"?

The possibilities are too distressing to contemplate. No more press badge. No more tuck. No more trips to the Breeders Cup.

'Major Bonkers'

TV EYE

A Time To Dance

(BBC1)

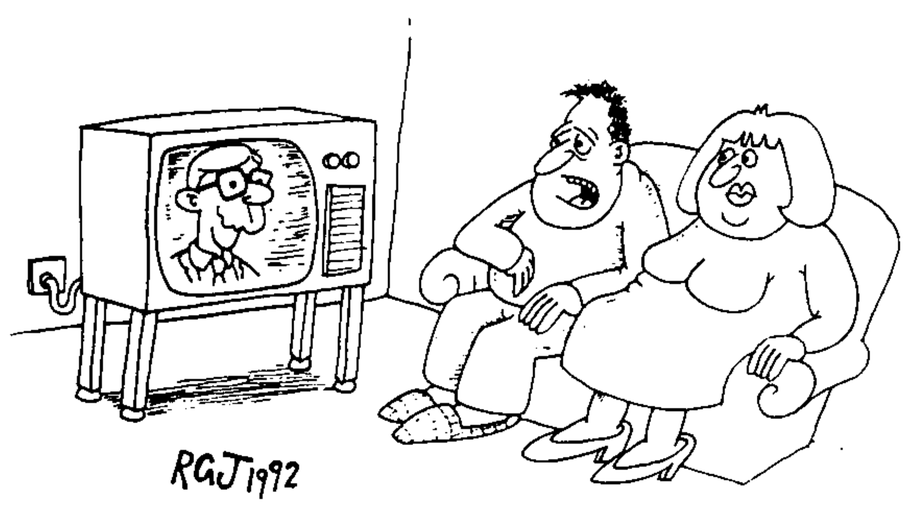
ONCE AGAIN, everyone's talking about Melvyn Bragg. And what are they saying? They are saying: "Did you see that prick on television?"

The comment is not, it should be explained, an unkind reference to Bragg's appearances as presenter of *The South Bank Show*, but rather to a sighting in the second episode of *A Time To Dance*, Bragg's own three-part adaptation of is 1990 novel about a Cumbrian bank manager getting his rocks off in the Lake District with an 18-year-old girl.

Half-way through episode two — as Ronald Pickup mounted the bed to make the latest of his withdrawals and deposits in Dervla Kirwin as the gymslip miss — the actor's penis was clearly visible. Theoretically, this advance was an advance, as it has been standard for male directors to focus on the nipple or even the bush while veiling male equipment. The problem was that — how can this be put? — Pickup's flesh was clearly not equal to the rhetoric of intent on his lips. Upstairs, it was all talk of passion and penetration but, downstairs, it was marshmallow time. This bewildering cock-up (or not) was typical of the combination of large ambition and small achievement which characterises the series.

Many commentators have suggested that *A Time To Dance* only received the BBC treatment because of — nudge, nudge — Bragg's connections. While tempting, this accusation is unfair. Bragg has written scores of books, all of which have stayed on the shelf. The reason the BBC pounced on this one was that it was a bonking novel. Improbable as it may seem in 1991 — after 30 years of increasing social freedoms and artistic explicitness — sex is seen as the salvation of the TV schedulers.

The last great BBC drama success was Andrea Newman's inventive bedspring-pinger *A Sense Of Guilt*. The failures of *Trainer* and *Ashenden* — the last two BBC Sunday night flyers — were attributed by many



"It's a pratty political broadcast"

to their celibacy. Yet 12 million people watched *A Time To Dance*, presumably to see an actress and an actor pretending to have fairly conventional sex. What is the explanation for the sellability of celluloid sex even in a liberated age? Do viewers secretly fear that they are doing it wrongly and seek elucidation from fiction? (If so, they now believe, after the Pickup flash, that erections are optional.) Or is it simply — and drably — that Bragg has cannily dramatised the fantasy — of screwing a schoolgirl — of the male middle-aged television viewers?

Evidence of the series' calculation of the commercialism of the carnal is the way in which Bragg and his director, Kevin Billington, have dealt with the sexual past of Bernadette, the teenager. In the novel, there is a brief reference to a rape in adolescence which removed her from the erotic arena until the bank-manager arrived with his savings-plan. On television, the rape is literally foregrounded, graphically dramatised at the beginning of the first episode. In the absence of any serious treatment of this notably bold psychological connection — raped by a dirty old man, Bernadette is sexually healed by a more palatable dirty old man — it must be suspected that the scene's real purpose was to provide some useful controversy-publicity.

And why, it must be asked, would viewers be watching except for the sex and controversy? The serial may be set in the Lake District but the words' worth is not very great. A terminally-ill wife is given to the bonking banker as a perfunctory excuse for the relationship. The Cumbrian scenery is explored more intently than the characters. The bank manager, for example, is presented with a complete absence of professional detail. In fact, he is a writer manqué, even shown tapping his story into an Amstrad to frame the narrative. This — and a passion for Hazlitt which he shares with the author — attest to the naivety of Bragg's complaints about identifications between himself and his libidinous middle-aged hero.

But, quibbles aside, he and the BBC have shown a sophisticated understanding of the market. Do not be surprised if there is soon an announcement of a new version of *Lolita*.

'Square Eyes'

I-BSkyB

VILLAINS in police cells are being allowed to watch satellite television to beat the boredom.

Nicks are replacing rented videos with roof-top dishes showing movies and sport.

Stations at Preston, Colne and Bacup in Lancashire now have BSkyB systems.

Others will be installed at Morecambe and Blackpool.

A spokesman said: "We used to rent videos but it is cheaper to have Sky."

The Sun

Ryan [Giggs] watched his first Football League game at five, from the stands at Cardiff's Ninian Park ground.

He now relaxes by watching films at cinemas or on Sky TV. He wears size 8 Puma boots.

The Sun

CONTRIBUTORS: Wayne Slater, Martin Dixon.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

WORLD OF HYPE

HILL and Knowlton, the PR outfit that introduced the anonymous "Nariyah" to the US Congress to give horrifying evidence about the slaughter of new-born babies by Iraqi troops in Kuwait — without telling anyone that she was the daughter of the Kuwait ambassador — are not always known for disclosing the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

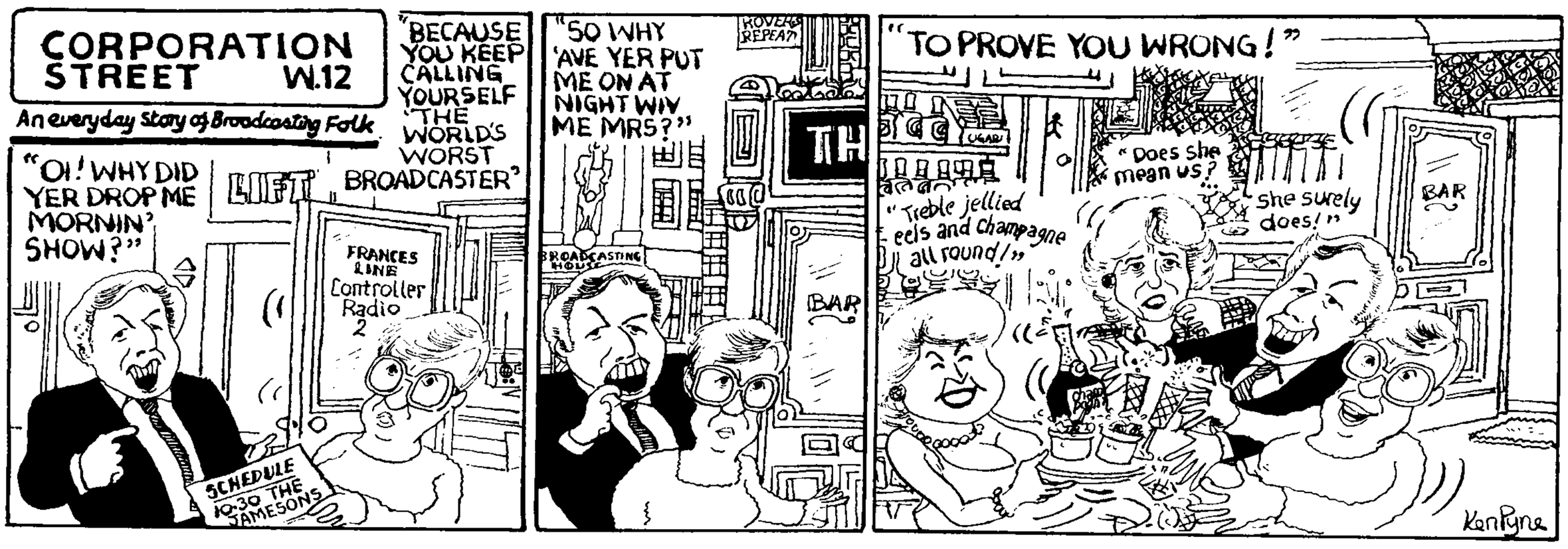
In 1990, for instance, many newspapers published the result of a MORI poll showing that most "top businessmen" had a low opinion of the Fayed brothers and the way they lied their way to control of the House of Fraser.

None of the papers that published the poll revealed who had commissioned it — Hill and Knowlton — nor the fact that among the PR company's most famous clients is Lonrho, bitter enemy of the Fayeds.

JUST FANCY THAT

MARK BOLEAT, director of the Council of Mortgage Lenders, wrote a letter correcting a recent mistake in the *Eye* and was very anxious to absolve the Government of any criticism from building societies.

Modestly he didn't reveal that he sits on the board of the Housing Corporation, a government body whose members are appointed directly by the secretary of state.


CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
"OI! WHY DID YER DROP ME MORNIN' SHOW?"
LIFT
FRANCES LINE Controller Radio 2
SCHEDULE 10:30 THE JAMESONS
"BECAUSE YOU KEEP CALLING YOURSELF 'THE WORLD'S WORST BROADCASTER"
"SO WHY 'AVE YER PUT ME ON AT NIGHT WIV ME MRS?"
ROVERS REPEAT?
BROADCASTING HOUSE
BAR
"TO PROVE YOU WRONG!"
"Does she mean us?"
she surely does!"
"Treble jellied eels and Champagne all round!"
BAR
Ken Pyne

O.B.N.

Vastly rich and devastatingly handsome, he [Tiny Rowland] can be a warm and loyal friend, showing a penchant for befriending the needy, such as Sir Freddie Laker and Ernest Saunders.

JUDI BEVAN
The Times

Who likes Esther Rantzen? Well, the 10 million people who regularly watch That's Life like her very much, according to audience research. The thousands of people who write to Esther Rantzen each week at That's Life like and trust her to expose injustice and crooks. And last, but not least, I like her. She is a superb executive producer and an excellent presenter, and people of her integrity do not grow on trees.

BRYHER SCUDAMORE
(Editor, That's Life)
Letter to Evening Standard

Submitted by Dave Abbott, T.D. Brooks

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

HUNT NEWS

STUART LORD, a Tyneside hunt saboteur, was due to appear before magistrates at Alnwick, Northumberland, on 15 January to face a public order charge following an incident last September.

He had been arrested for calling Ian Weir, a whipper-in with the Newcastle and District Beagles harehunt, a "prat" during a dispute about the whereabouts of a public footpath and was charged with "disorderly behaviour" and causing "harassment, alarm and distress".

Happily, at 5.30pm on 14 January, Lord received a letter from the Crown Prosecution Service saying the charges were being dropped.

Meanwhile the present season has seen some ugly incidents. Two hounds belonging to the Old Berks Foxhunt were killed by an Inter City express train, near Shrivenham, in Oxfordshire. An Oxford hunt saboteur, Miles Cooper, who witnessed and photographed the collision, claims to have been ridden down by one huntsman and cropped by another, while a second saboteur, Martin Winfield, claims that he was punched to the ground while trying to raise the police on a mobile phone. When the police arrived they declined to register the saboteurs' complaints of assault.

On 11 January, three saboteurs were assaulted by a huntsman and some terriermen with the Essex Farmers' and Union Foxhunt. One saboteur suffered a broken nose, another was knocked unconscious and concussed and the third was hit on the hand with an iron bar. All three were treated at Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford, and the police are said to be investigating the assaults.

'Reynard'

ATTICVS

HACKWATCH No 14: Atticus

THE Atticus column in the *Sunday Times* has a long and moderately noble tradition. Previous custodians of the title include Robert Robinson, Philip Norman, Ian Jack and Stephen Pile.

However, following the departure of the last proper Atticus, Henry Porter, Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill seized the column for use as a dump-bin for his personal grudges and vendettas.

On one memorable occasion, a year ago, Atticus attacked an obscure property developer called Andrew Ross-Skinner for trying to "cheat his agent out of his £15,000 commission by selling one of his flats without telling him". The London flat in question was 1 Bina Gardens, and the gazumped buyer — whom Atticus neglected to name — was Andrew Neill.

To give it a respectable veneer, Neill fills some of the column with tedious "gossip" from Westminster, provided by his political hacks Michael Jones and David Hughes. But, as the following digest shows, its essential purpose is still petty point-scoring over Brillo Pad's rivals.

11 August: "Atticus has never before come to the defence of his proprietor, but Simon Hoggart... made a point of such stupidity [in the *Observer*] last week that it should not pass without comment." [Hoggart's crime had been to suggest that the successful Pavarotti concert in Hyde Park "proves once again how wrong Rupert Murdoch is. He believes that people crave rubbish and that he has the right to get rich by providing it".] "The *Sunday Times*," according to Atticus, "attracts twice as many quality readers as the *Observer*, which hardly bears out Hoggart's theory". If you accept that the *Sunday Times* isn't rubbish...

18 August: Harangues the *Independent* for being too sympathetic to Norman Lamont, the *Sunset Times*'s bete noire.

1 September: Again harangues the *Independent* for being too sympathetic to Norman Lamont.

15 September: Mocks the *Independent* magazine's diarist, "The Weasel", for guessing that there would be little sex in the memoirs of David Owen or Roy Jenkins. "When he opened the *Sunday Times* the next morning to see our extracts of Owen's love life, he must have choked on whatever Weasels eat for breakfast." This seems unlikely: there may be plenty of adolescent love poetry in Owen's book, but there is indeed very little sex.

22 September: Says the main television channels are "a bore" and are driving viewers to the delights of satellite broadcasts. (Unmentioned fact: Andrew Neill's boss, Rupert Murdoch, owns Sky Television.)

29 September: Yet another clod-hopping boast: "The *Guardian* and the *Independent* found it hard going to come to terms with Mori's poll for the *Sunday Times* last week..."

20 October: Atticus rather desperately reminds readers that "the *Sunday Times* led its front page last week" with a report about opposition to defence cuts. "You read it here first," he emphasises.

27 October: Tantrum time. "Atticus has several times been forced to expose the wickedness of that miserable little man, Auberon Waugh. Now Atticus has made a more important discovery. Waugh is a liar." Waugh has pointed out that the *Sunset Times*'s attack on Carmen Proetta, a witness to the Gibraltar shootings, was encouraged by Mrs Thatcher's government and MI5. "There is not an iota of truth in that," screams Atticus, whirling his handbag with the passion of a discus-thrower. "But Waugh is such a malicious creep when it comes to the *Sunday Times* that the truth has rarely interfered with what he writes."

10 November: Whinges that the *Grauniad* didn't report the punch-up between its political editor and his opposite number on the *Mirror*: "Atticus thinks we should be told." Whinges about the "Black Dog" column of political gossip in the *Mail on Sunday*: "Back in your kennel, Fido."

17 November: Again rebukes the *Grauniad* and its editor, Peter Preston. "Atticus has a tip for Preston's news-hounds..."

24 November: Berates the *Economist* (Andrew Neill's former employer) for not predicting the recession.

1 December: More boasting. "The European Commission beat a hasty retreat after the *Sunday Times* revealed its plans for an EC-wide minimum wage last weekend..."

15 December: Rebukes Samuel Brittan, the *Financial Times* economics writer, for his "bizarre outburst against the *Sunday Times*" during Radio 4's *Start the Week* programme. Brittan had called the paper's vendetta against Norman Lamont "odious".

12 January: Atticus returns from his long Christmas break with... more of the same. "Norman Lamont was twitted last week by David Frost on his TV-am programme about the fact that Michael Heseltine had given this newspaper a big interview. Did that mean Heseltine and Lamont disagreed on whether the *Sunday Times* was 'a pretty squalid newspaper' — Lamont's own recent description of us?"

19 January: Takes a break from attacking Norman Lamont to attack Simon Hoggart again. "They are such rotten losers at the *Observer*," the main story in Atticus reveals. "Last week a team from the *Sunday Times* knocked them out in the first round of the BBC Radio 4 quiz *The Year in Question*." Atticus condemns Hoggart, the *Observer* captain, for querying the score. "Can the Hoggart outburst have anything to do with the fact that he chairs the rival Radio 4 show *The News Quiz*?" Probably not: Hoggart does not chair *The News Quiz*.

26 January: Atticus boasts once again of the *Sunset Times'* victory over the *Observer* and condemns Hoggart for querying the score. "Well," Atticus quips, "we always thought the *Observer* didn't count." *Geddit*?

JACKBOOTS

THE climate of Rantzenism is spreading throughout Britain and has now reached the photographic processing department at Boots.

Customers should be aware that Boots staff are likely to study their pictures and where they think it necessary, publicly censure and rebuke those who take them.

Such a fate befell a family from Chatham in Kent. When they collected their photographs, which they had taken at the end of last year, they were subjected to a tongue-lashing and public dressing down from the photo supervisor, who berated them for sending offensive pictures for development.

The pictures in question were of the family's ten-week old daughter, a victim of cot death syndrome. The family had taken simple, quiet and dignified photographs as their only record of their daughter.

IN THE COURTS

SOME 10 to 15 candidates are said to have put themselves forward to be the new Director of Public Prosecutions following the resignation of Sir Allan Green after his visit to King's Cross.

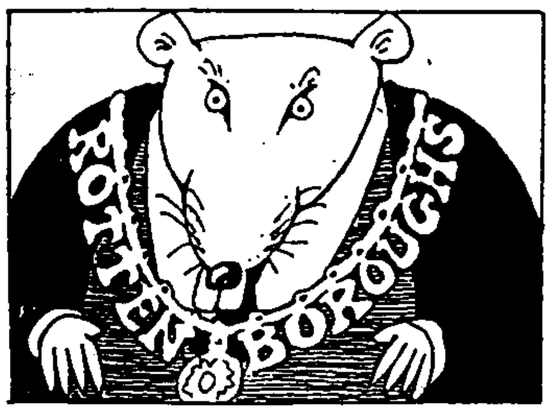
The Serious Fraud office is said to be well represented — not just by its ambitious director Barbara Mills, but by her predecessor, John "Dead" Wood, currently in Hong Kong. (Wood was once a senior official at the DPP.) Also said to be interested is Michael "No" Chance, passed over at the SFO for Mills and now in private practice.

Mills is said to be a likely shortlist runner, but there are doubts about whether this time the previous legal problems of husband John may not prove an obstacle.

Other names mentioned are two junior judges, Rant and Rivlin, as well as Green's deputy, the current acting DPP David Gandy. A final decision is expected next month.

Whoever wins will be reassured by the knowledge that whatever they get up to while on the job — even if it leads to marital breakdown, as it did in the case of Sir Allan — they will always be welcomed back at the Bar.

"Are we having a child-centred lesson, a negotiated curriculum, or are you going to talk to us for the whole lesson, sir?"



STAFFORDSHIRE

TONY LATHAM, the Staffordshire social worker who instigated and ran the county council's sadistic "pin-down" system of abusing children in its care, has finally been booted out.

The dithering Labour council deserves no credit for his departure, however. As long ago as the autumn of 1989 councillors received a high court injunction preventing them from inflicting pin-down on their charges. And all through the public clamour for Staffs to come clean over pindown — brought about by the *Eye*'s revelations and culminating in the damning report by Allan Levy QC — Latham has remained in the authority's employ.

Thanks to the local government unions' greater concern for their members' bank balances than for the public purse, Latham has been paid his full wage, some £50,000, for the last two-and-a-half years. The supposedly impoverished council will keep up these payments until April. Latham will also have escaped appropriate disciplinary action for his pin-down activities, which included forcing kids into solitary, semi-naked confinement against their will, having been on "special leave" rather than suspension for that time.

Have Staffordshire's Labour leaders finally seen the error of their ways? The evidence suggests not. The official reason cited for Latham's departure is that his continued employment would "damage the authority's reputation". When the bills for compensation to the children abused while in the council's care are settled, the local authority's reputation will be damaged still further — to the tune of about £2 million.

BIRMINGHAM

NOT CONTENT with his knighthood, Birmingham's Labour leader Sir "Dick" Knowles is now aiming to become a socialist press baron.

He and his colleagues have forced through a £1 million scheme — all at the poll taxpayers' expense — to print a fortnightly free-sheet for distribution to every home in the city.

Atomic Lynda Longbottom, a fugitive PR specialist from the nuclear industry and now director of the sinister "directorate" of public affairs, will produce it. Loyal city press officers have already dubbed her council house cubby-hole the "Office of Shame".

As always, the hidden agenda is rather more interesting. The scheme was in fact prompted by Sir Dick's increasingly impotent fury at the torrent of tales of municipal misdeeds in the local press. His new organ will take almost all the city's colossal advertising budget away from the smug *Birmingham Post & Mail*, and he has already had the satisfaction of a sycophantic letter from *Post & Mail* editor Chris Oakley asking him to reconsider.

The letter arrived while councillors debated the scheme and copies of it were distributed to gleeful Labour councillors, who promptly approved the paper unanimously.

The original scheme promised complete editorial independence with an external firm editing and printing the paper — a measure aimed at ensuring neutrality. Only when tenders went out did it emerge that the successful company would have to install a computer link with full sub-editing functions in Atomic Lynda's office, where chief officers can "manage" the news to their heart's content.

AN AMUSING tale of bungling and cover-ups has emerged after a senior city supplies officer accidentally ordered 300 tons of lard for the city's schools.

He meant to order 30 tons — enough to supply the city for a year — but cocked up his decimal points and thus ordered a decade's worth for £160,000.

A massive operation swung into action with London suppliers A.J. Mills & Co ordering vast tankers of liquid pig fat from the continent for processing into lard. Only after they had trundled across Europe into Britain and been processed did anyone from Birmingham query the huge amounts of lard accumulating in school stores.

Once the error was realised the supplies department, headed by Peter Woollard, tried to break the contract and A.J. Mills sued. The city's barrister capitulated as soon as its chief witness, Ian Simpson, a former city supplies officer, now moved to Wolverhampton, had given evidence and went for a settlement.

Now the city has to pay £127,000 for the lard, plus the legal costs — about £200,000 altogether. Strangely neither Mr Woollard nor Mr Simpson can remember who filled in the form.

MURKEYSIDE

TREVOR "Doggy Bag" Smith (see *Eyes passim*), Liverpool's lord mayor, is about to return from a "town twinning" tour of China.

Exactly what the Manchurian city of Harbin has in common with Liverpool has never been made clear, but it's a long way for even Smithy to go for a take-away.

Another civic leader soon to visit foreign parts is Harry Rimmer. He will be touring the United States on a freebie with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Regular concert goers claim never to have seen Rimmer at an LPO performance, suspecting his musical tastes to be closer to Bygraves than Beethoven. But Liverpool city council has earmarked £3 million of aid money to the Phil, so taking Rimmer along with the baggage is a nice gesture.

Rimmer will be stateside at the vital time when the council is supposed to set its budget. "You'll get on well without me," he beamed to fellow councillors. "You might at least *pretend* to be the leader," replied his critics.

The real leader of the Rimmer rump has, of course, been Vicki "Queen Victoria" Roberts, the prime mover in making redundancies among the workforce. None of the city's Labour wards appears to want her either and she is expected to retire gracefully in May. So who will lead the council after that?

Strong odds are offered on the late Keva Coombes, who has recently been seen conducting surgeries in his Clubmoor ward. If Keva wins the leadership again he'll qualify for *The Guinness Book of Records*, having had more resurrections than Lazarus.

BURY

MORE CHAOS has hit Bury, Greater Manchester, where aggrieved locals have engaged Messrs Sue, Grabbit & Runne to seek a ruling on the Labour council's aborted £6.5 million investment in the Bank of Conmen and Cocaine International.

What was meant to be a test case brought by a representative Bury citizen against incompetent town hall financiers has developed into an all-out assault with no fewer than 50 locals lining up writs on grounds of negligence. The locals have been particularly irked by a succession of gaffes by the town hall since the BCCI losses were revealed. These include the council's failure to collect £200,000 worth of rent and rates from a local double-glazing company for three years before the firm went bust, and a rates demand for five pence, sent out with a first-class stamp of course!

Meanwhile, announcements that BCCI account holders may receive 75 per cent of their investment in compensation are being desperately touted by Bury council leaders in their propaganda campaign. Reminders that such payments have been set at a maximum of £15,000 per investor (not per ratepayer) have cut little ice with the hysterical leaders who have conjured up the claim that major investors are to get a 40 per cent return.

To make up for the catastrophic losses, the council plans to slash next year's budget and axe 450 jobs, much to the chagrin of Nalgo, the normally-militant local government union. In a rare display of bourgeois deviationism it is planning to sue the council rather than bring it to its knees.

Town hall employees have been particularly upset by council leader Colin Jones's claim that staff attendance records would be "taken into consideration" when the notices go out, pointing to Kinnochio's famous Labour Party conference "don't dare to be ill" speech attacking cruel Tories.

Although Jones has also warned that it is "common for people in industry to live by their records — I see no reason why we shouldn't apply it in Bury", he has yet to apply his own dictum at the top where the man most responsible for the BCCI investment, finance director Brian Smallridge, is still in situ.

ALLERDALE

ALLERDALE'S ill-fated decision to enter the holiday home time-share market, revealed in the *Eye* last year, has resulted in an embarrassing battle with the council's disgraced ex-chief executive Tony Perry.

Perry, who is appealing against unfair dismissal, was sacked after the council notched up losses of nearly £5 million in its aborted Keswick Spa scheme, run by an arms-length company, Allerdale Development, which crashed last year owing £4.8 million (and rising) to Credit Suisse.

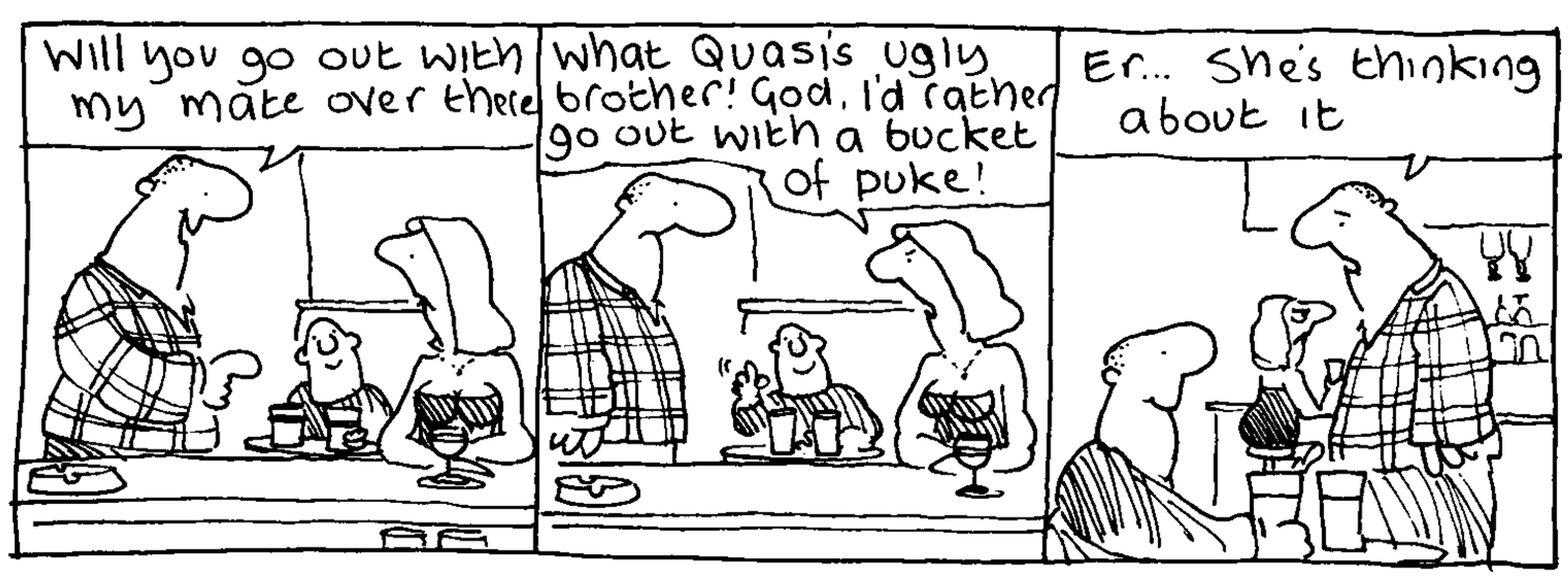
Soon after the *Eye*'s revelations last April, Perry was suspended from of the by-now Tory/Independent-run council. Yet, astonishingly, Perry's response to a date being set for his disciplinary hearing was to take a much-needed holiday in Paihia, New Zealand — at the luxury Bishop timeshare complex!

Councillors at Workington town hall were less than impressed by the chief executive's belated research into time-share holidaying and sent him 27 questions and a five-volume report on the Keswick Spa farce. Perry replied with a postcard giving three months' notice of his retirement. The personnel sub-committee then sacked him.

Allerdale seems to have learnt its lesson. Councillors have now insured themselves against further losses by issuing two writs for professional negligence, one against Perry and the other against timeshare consultant CSL.

If Credit Suisse, from whom Allerdale borrowed £5.23 million to set up Keswick Spa, proceeds with court action to recover its debt Allerdale will activate its two writs. However, if Credit Suisse writes off the council's debt Allerdale will do nowt.

HUSBAND


Will you go out with my mate over there
What Quasi's ugly brother! God, I'd rather go out with a bucket of puke!
Er... She's thinking about it

HACKNEY

FACED WITH a series of corruption scandals — including the infamous keys-for-cash housing racket — the Kinnockite *apparatchiks* who run Hackney have leapt into action. They have taken firm steps... to suppress all criticism of the council.

The *Hackney Heckler*, "a free, populist newsheet" according to its authors, is produced irregularly and distributed to a few thousand homes in the borough. A recent issue, under the headline STEALING OUR HOMES, made the scurrilous allegation that Linda Hibberd, chair of Hackney's housing committee, had assisted her son to skip the waiting list and get a council flat.

Rather than initiate an immediate investigation to clear Ms Hibberd of the accusations, the council leadership took steps to stifle them. The executive of the Labour group discussed the *Heckler*'s allegations at the behest of council leader John McCafferty. Approaches had already been made to certain ward Labour parties, soliciting funds to enable a private investigator and a solicitor to be retained, with a view to suing the *Heckler*'s authors for libel.

Those who dared to oppose this *fait accompli* by suggesting better uses to which the money could be put were accused by the leadership of being "out of their minds", and having been voted through by the executive, the decision was approved by the full Labour group.

An investigation was, however, launched into a number of council-funded community centres that displayed or distributed the *Heckler* or were used as meeting places by "subversive" groups — i.e. those critical of the council. This is, perhaps, not entirely unconnected with the fact that it was a supporter of one such "subversive" organisation — the anarchist group Hackney Solidarity — who first uncovered the keys-for-cash scam.

This observant chappie — who had noticed something rather odd about the way empty properties on his estate were allocated — naturally took the evidence he had collected to the council's director of housing. She promised to "get back to him" about it. Before she did, he received a nocturnal visit from a number of men. The intruders promised him money to keep his mouth shut, and then beat him and his girlfriend with baseball bats when their offer was refused.

The informant's fears for his health were not quieted when he subsequently rang the housing department to discover that the director had decamped to Brazil. His own attempts to interest newspapers in the scandal were met with a wall of journalistic indifference, and the story only saw the light of day when he handed his dossier to a Liberal councillor who gleefully alerted the media, setting in motion a whole series of exposés of council frauds.

GLASGOW

STILL giddy with having been European City of Culture in 1990, Glasgow's Labour leaders are only now realising that the city's acute social problems are piling up on their doorsteps.

According to Shelter, Glasgow's homeless number more than 8,000 with around 300 sleeping rough each night, and the latest figures from McKnacker of the Strathclyde Police reveal that knife attacks have increased by 18 per cent over the past year.

While Glasgee' may be the home of Scotland's leading theatres, council housing bosses have reminded art-house town hall leaders that the city is also the tower block capital of western Europe with more than £100 million needed urgently to combat rising damp in 58,000 properties.

None of which has impressed council leader Pat "Tin Pan" Lally, who has paid £250,000 to the Graffix International Design outfit to dream up the city's latest snazzy slogan "Glasgow's Alive" to replace the 1990s' "Glasgow's Miles Better".

But why Graffix? The company has a new recruit, legendary Clydeside operator Dr Michael Kelly — proprietor of PR firm Kelly Associates, ex-Labour councillor and the city's former lord provost (that's mayor to Sassenachs).

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'

THE industry's high-circulation freebie, *Farming News*, claims on its masthead to be "the weekly that puts the farmer first". No surprise then that editor Don Taylor should decide to publish a new version of its booklet *Farming Facts*.

The aim, says the freesheet, is to counteract the critics of agriculture and to put the record straight for farming. However, the truth is that the book is little more than an apology for the pesticide industry.

Reading these so-called facts you'd think there were no such things as food mountains and pesticide residues. Still, it's not really surprising since the loaded little publication is actually bankrolled by the chemical giant Hoechst.

Like most of the other editorial in *Farming News*, its real aim is to prop up falling agrochem sales. Why doesn't the fearless freesheet put that on its masthead instead?

EACH YEAR the Pesticide Minister compels every sheep farmer in the country to dip his stock against sheep scab. Since only one sheep in a thousand is infected, it's a fairly futile exercise. But it wouldn't matter much if all they were using was Vosene. Unfortunately the beasts are made to slosh around in organo-phosphorus compounds, originally developed as nerve gases and among the most dangerous chemicals known to man.

Thus to kill a parasite in a handful of animals Junior Minister David Maclean sanctions the widespread pollution of land and rivers — not to mention the contamination of lamb chops — with this disgusting material.

There's also growing evidence that the stuff has dire effects on the chaps who do the dipping, despite the apparent lack of concern from Whitehall. Word has reached the steading that as many as one in three sheep farmers suffer worrying side affects from handling OPs, everything from painful limbs to nausea and dizziness.

The minister's response is to order a long-term investigation by the Health and Safety Executive, which is likely to take three years. Yet the symptoms appear cumulative, so for each year the annual dipping circus goes on more farmers are likely to suffer.

Clearly the nonsensical blanket dipping policy should be axed and OPs withdrawn until they can be given a clean bill of health. But with the minister's pals in the animal health companies making millions out of OPs, that's not likely to happen in a hurry.

ACCORDING to farming pundit Oliver Walston, the landed son of the late Labour peer Lord Walston, it's time to scrap farm subsidies.

With the zeal of the new convert, the man with a comfy 2,000 acres in Cambridgeshire is currently missing no media opportunity to bang on against the wickedness of state featherbedding for farmers. Nor is he alone. It seems a whole clutch of Britain's larger farmers are suddenly discovering the virtues of the free market.

This is odd when you consider that for the past 50 years it's the big farmers who have been pocketing by far the larger share of state handouts, leaving small farmers to squabble over the crumbs. So what's brought about this sudden change of heart? Could it be EC Farm Commissioner Ray MacSharry's avowed intention to direct public subsidies towards Europe's small farmers for a change?

"We must stand straight and tall," says Ollie. "If the choice is between MacSharry and no subsidies at all, we want no subsidies." Pity he and some of the other barley barons didn't say that 20 years ago. There might be a lot more small family farms still knocking about if he had.

Letters

Sham burghers

Sir,

Your Staffordshire correspondent (Rotten Boroughs, 17 January) has his facts wrong.

It will be the poor, and with the reduced rate support grant, even poorer, chargepayers of Staffordshire who are going to pick up the tab for the pindown affair, the dubious businesses, the subsequent inquiry and ritual "letting go" of council officers.

The burghers of Stoke-on-Trent, in whose province the sorry mess flourished, have been found innocent and will suffer no greater penalty than anyone else in the country.

The control of the county council is held by THE PARTY *and, as a good socialist party, it believes that the cost of the local politburo's bungling should be carried by chargepayers throughout the county.*

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN SANDERS,

Lichfield, Staffs.

Rent boys

Sir,

I feel it necessary to remedy the false claim in Sally Deedes' column of 17 January that the Crown Estate overrules assessments made by Camden's rent officer.

Like other landlords the Crown Estate is bound by the 1977 Rent Act. Under this legislation the rents are set by the rent officer. Both the landlord and the tenant have the right to appeal against the rent determined by the rent officer if either party feels dissatisfied with the figure. This appeal is considered by the independently appointed Rent Assessment Committee. The Crown Estate abides by their decision. There is no question of either the rent officer's or the Rent Assessment Committee's decision being "overruled by a Crown Estate appeal panel of three".

Yours faithfully
CHRISTOPHER HOWES,

Second Crown Estate Commissioner, The Crown Estate, London SW1.

Lookalike

Morticia **Cher**

Sir,

I couldn't help noticing a certain resemblance between Morticia Addams and Cher. Are they related? Are they embalmed? Can Cher's face move without cracking? I don't think we should be told.

Yours,
PHILIP GUILLERMOND,

Barbican, EC2

Nightmares on Hobbit Street

Sir,

While I agree that it's beyond time to end the post-Tolkien stories by his survivors, I think Bookworm should be stuffed into a Snobbit-hole for his sniffy attempt to diminish J.R.R. Tolkien because he wrote CHILDREN'S *stories (*EYE *785). Considering Britain's paucity of first class writers since P.G. Wodehouse, he should reconsider. Or is he bitter because he thinks* PRIVATE EYE *has the UK copyright on juvenile fiction?*

Commenting on THE LORD OF THE RINGS, *author Peter Beagle said, in part: "...in the end it is Middle-earth and its dwellers that we love, not Tolkien's considerable gifts in showing it to us. I said once that the world he charts was there long before him, and I still believe it. He is a great enough magician to tap our most common nightmares, daydreams and twilight fancies, but he never invented them either; he found them a place to live, a green alternative to each day's madness here in a poisoned world.*

"We are raised to honour all the wrong explorers and discoverers — thieves planting flags, murderers carrying crosses. Let us at last praise the colonizers of dreams."

Yours faithfully,
TONY EBERTS,

Vancouver, Canada.

Too many Cookes

Sir,

Music & Musicians of 15 January is not quite accurate.

Firstly, our new chorus master Jeremy Jackman did not attend King's College.

Secondly, it was not the music director who terminated Richard Cooke's contract. I did.

Lastly, the London Philharmonic Choir is performing with the orchestra in May under the baton of the music director and has one of its heaviest schedules of all time in the 1992/3 season, most of which is with The London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Please could you note the correct spelling of my surname, as I would not wish anyone to be in doubt about whom you are talking.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN WILLAN,

Managing Director, The London Philharmonic Orchestra, London WC1.

Fireman's lift

Sir,

In the EYE *of 17 January you quoted Jaci Stephen as giving the French for a blow-job initially as "une pipe", then as "faire une pipe". In fact, both are wrong. The correct phrase is "faire un pompier" (literal translation: make a fireman).*

Yours faithfully,
SUZETTE DUMESNIL,

Liphook, Hants.

LUVVIES

He [Patrick Swayze] realised one day, as he chewed an aspirin to relieve toothache, that by thinking on a higher plane he could rise above both physical pain and feelings of failure. This developed into the white light which energises him and in which he wraps himself for protection.

At an audition in his early days in Los Angeles he used it to positive effect. "I thought the competition looked better and were better actors, so I decided to draw on the white light. It worked that day and has continued to do so. Now I'm one of Hollywood's most successful stars..."

Sunday Mirror

Submitted by Paul Oswald.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries printed.

Animal crackers

Sir,

Your informant insults the intelligence both of your readership and Fellows of the Zoological Society of London in attributing to me the remark that "Fellows are not allowed to communicate with one another" (Sally Deedes, 3 January, 1992).

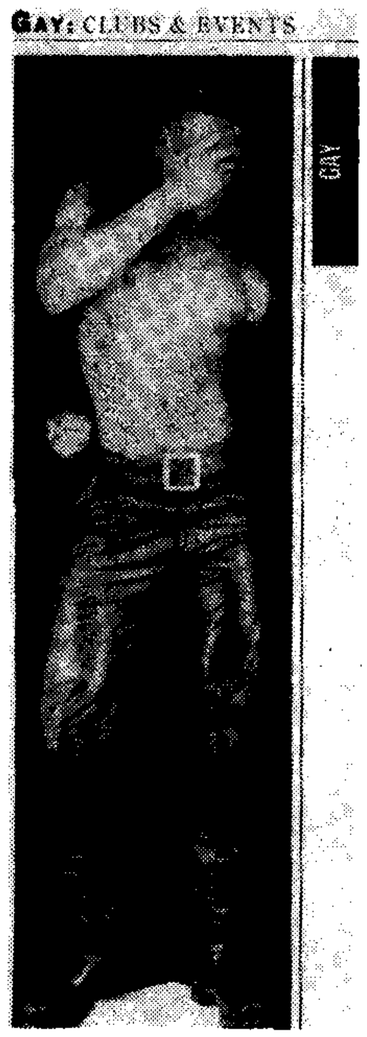
The society has bent over backwards to accommodate the Ad Hoc Group (who would muster only 191 votes out of a fellowship of 2,138) and has at its own expense distributed material highly critical and in many cases downright libellous of the society's activities. The present membership list is to be published within the next four weeks. Its "secrecy" is yet another legacy from the totalitarianism of an earlier regime at the society and the niceties of the Data Protection Act have forced us, prior to publication, to seek approval from each individual fellow.

Yours faithfully,
P.H. DENTON,

Director of Administration, The Zoological Society of London, London NW1.

Lookalike

Dancer



Editor

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the strange resemblance between well-known Oldie editor Richard Ingrams and the anonymous gay dancer pictured in City Limits. Could they perhaps be related?

Yours,
ENA B. RUSHTON,

London.

Wild life

Sir,

I am sure the EYE *will join me in pointing out to John Sheehan (*EYE *784, Letters) that it is not only fox hunting that is a despicable and disgusting pastime, so is making wild and incorrect assumptions and statements.*

I have lived in the country all my life and have never allowed a hunt on to my land as the "mayhem" caused by a fox torn limb from limb by a pack of hounds is quite unbearable, and I have no intention of moving into an "inner-city squat" when there are so many repossessed houses to buy at the moment.

Perhaps next time he considers people as "odious creatures" he should do some more considering.

Yours faithfully,
BEN LEETE,

Exeter, Devon.

Where indeed?

Sir,

*W. Bratley (*EYE *785) must bring himself up-to-date. Protecting tenant farmers from the tyranny of the landlord no longer forms part of the anti-fox hunting campaign. He may not have noticed that in the recent attempt to ban fox-hunting on council-owned land in Gloucestershire the tenant farmers overwhelmingly opposed the proposal. And, of course, if tenants, left to themselves, would bar hunts from their land, why all the attempts by Labour councillors to impose a ban on them?*

A further point. Of course not all country people are pro-hunting, not even all those born and raised in the countryside, but if Hadyn Grant (?), living in a rural area, doesn't know one person who even supports the principle of hunting he must be extremely selective in the people he chooses to know. Where do all the people who hunt and even more the large numbers who follow the hunt in cars come from?

Yours faithfully,
P. GREGORY,

Gloucestershire.

Horse sense

Sir,

*I believe it is common tactics for those defeated by reason to resort to stereotyping of the "enemy". J.S. Thornton's (*EYE *784) references to the anti-hunt lobby as "criminal riff-raff", "anarchist class war" and J. Sheehan's references to "inner-city squats" and "urban spartists" would be laughable as pompous nonsense if their distortion of the facts were not so all pervading.*

Well, Messrs Thornton & Sheehan, I live in the "sticks" and was born in the country, my grandfather was a major in the Royal Horse Artillery and then worked for our local country vet for many years as horseman, he was a true countryman and despised what he called the "thugs of the countryside". I and many of my rural bumpkin friends support this view

Yours, not dressed to kill,
S. WILLIAMS,

Suffolk.

Misnomer

Sir,

*First you get the name of my organ wrong (*EYE *784). Then you get my own name wrong (*EYE *785).*

I really must hire Garry Bushell's press agent.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES CATCHPOLE,

News of the World, London E1.

Strippers

Sir,

Now that the disloyal bastard Alex has been enlisted in Max's private army, can we expect to see Taylor and Peattie double their beer money by arranging for the rather funnier Gary Bloke to be wooed by PUNCH? *I think we should be told before we renew our subscriptions.*

Yours faithfully,
GEOFF WOOLLEN,

French and German Publications, University of Glasgow, Glasgow.

Whine

Sir,

*Come, come! Mérignac is so far from being "near Marseilles" (*EYE *785) as to be in the suburbs of Bordeaux.* SHURELY *you meant Marignane?*

Yours faithfully,
DAVID JONES,

Bordeaux, France.

I-SPY

Plymouth

Submitted by D. Graham. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Bankers

Sir,

*The difficulties experienced by Mr Sirot (*EYE *785) with Nat West bank came as no surprise to me. I have banked with these people for nearly 20 years, always maintaining an adequate balance. I also have a mortgage with their home loan division paid by direct debit.*

I felt obliged some time ago to request a credit card facility. Imagine my amazement when I received a two line reply after four weeks declining my request. This from the callous incompetents who poured millions out to Cap'n Bob and inundated my son, who is at university and has no money, with endless unsolicited offers of loans and credit.

Keep up the good work.

Yours faithfully,
MR P. MASTERSON,

Oxford.

Kemp follower

Sir,

Re: How They Are Related, issue 784

1. Arnold Kemp is not a shareholder in Hyndland TV.

2. He was not in the office and possibly not in Glasgow when a release arrived from HTV's managing director, David Kemp.

3. He advises his staff to deal objectively with stories from David, who is a distinguished Scottish journalist as well as his brother.

4. The GLASGOW HERALD *may have been the only Scottish national to criticise the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. That is not unusual; Arnold Kemp was the only Scottish editor to publicly call Robert Maxwell a bully when he locked out* DAILY RECORD *staff.*

Yours relatedly (and belatedly),
JACKIE KEMP,

National News Agency, Faringdon, London.

One upmanship

Sir,

I didn't think it would take long before that blithering biased old fart McLie retaliated for your kind coverage of his journalistic endeavours. As for his comments about your subscription rates, I s'pose I'd better have one!

Cheers,
MIKE NICHOLLS,

London N8.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"You cannot guarantee a thing in this game. All you can guarantee is disappointment."
GRAEME SOUNESS, GLR
(P.J. Coveney)

"Aberdeen are taking this bitter pill on the chin."
COMMENTATOR, BBC Radio Scotland
(John McRitchie)

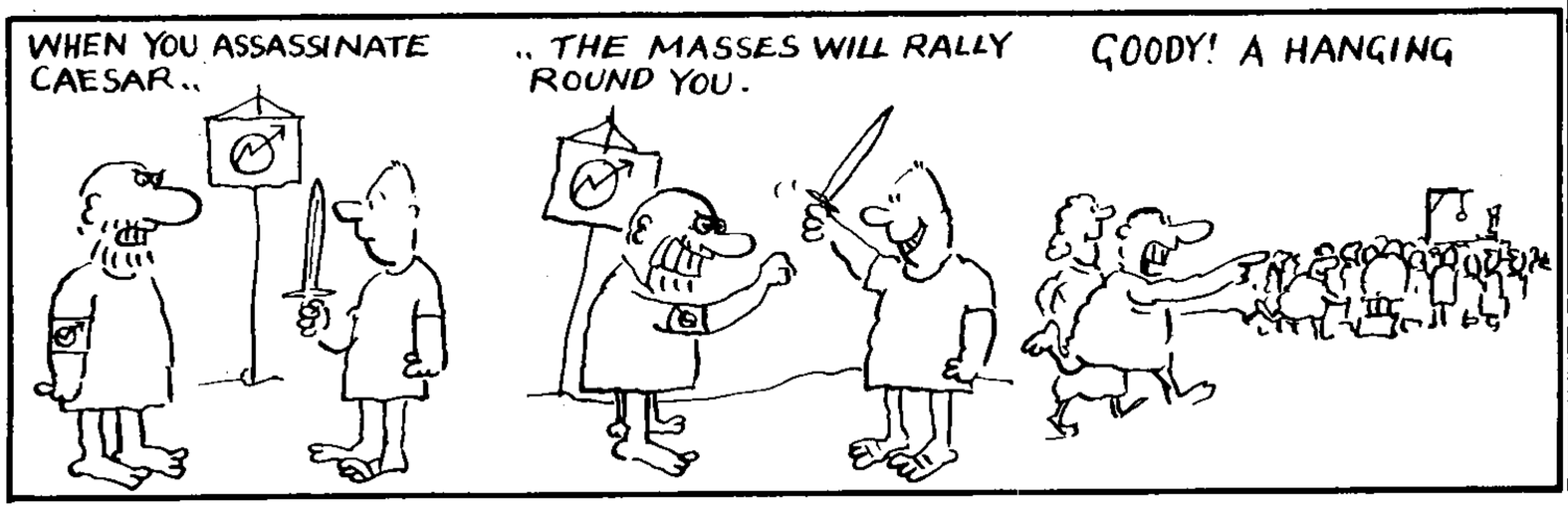
"[The new] Liverpool St Station... the greatest development in London since the Great Fire of 1666."
GUY MICHELMORE, BBC
(Malcolm Griffiths)

"The faintest of rumours, no larger than a man's hand..."
JOHN SIMPSON, BBC
(John Twells)

"Mozart is celebrating the 200th anniversary of his death."
DEREK JAMESON, Radio 2
(Alan E. Smith)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from **Japan**

Kakuei Tanaka

Kiichi Miyazawa

from Our Own Correspondent

ANOTHER YEAR, another scandal — or, to be more accurate, another couple of scandals. 1992 has not only opened with the arrest of former cabinet minister Fumio Abe on bribery charges, but will soon see the growth of yet another Recruit-type scandal centred on the transport company Tokyo Sagawa Kyubin.

As with Recruit, the Sagawa case involves a company paying massive "contributions" to politicians, although exactly how much and to whom has not yet been fully uncovered. Insiders say more than 200 politicians benefited, with some top names receiving as much as £40 million apiece. The exact extent of Tokyo Sagawa Kyubin's generosity will become clearer as Inspector Knacker-san proceeds with his inquiries.

In return for its favours, the parent company, Sagawa Kyubin, forged an easy path towards its current position as the second largest delivery company in Japan.

What makes the scandal worse than Recruit is that TSK is also embroiled in some very suspicious loans which have virtually bankrupted the company. TSK guaranteed around half a billion pounds' worth of loans to companies controlled by our notorious *yakuza* — mafia. Much of this was done through Hokuto Development, a company set up by TSK and controlled by one of the board executives. Although Hokuto Development — nominally a golf course development company — received some £250 million worth of direct loans or guaranteed loans from TSK, only £65 million actually went into golf course development.

Most of the rest was channelled to companies controlled by the Inagawa-Kai, a Yokohama-based *yakuza* syndicate (the unwitting "consultant" for one of the companies, West Tsusho, was none other than Prescott Bush, President Bush's older brother), which used it for speculation in the stock of the Honshu Paper Co and other "investments".

Also a beneficiary of the loans was the late Susumu Ishii, former gang boss of the Inagawa-kai, who received at least £34 million guaranteed by TSK executives who falsified minutes of board meetings in order not to arouse suspicions over the loan guarantee.

Altogether, TSK's loan guarantees come to around £1,770 million, of which only £670 million has been paid back. The company is therefore in serious financial trouble; but having distributed so much wealth among politicians it is not without friends. The Sanwa bank is stepping in to prop the company up because, it is rumoured, deputy prime minister Shin Kanemaru requested the rescue as a personal favour. He is grateful to TSK for having lubricated enough palms to get his erstwhile chum Noboru Takeshita "elected" to the premiership five years ago.

As details of all this skulduggery emerge, the scandal is going to do little to help the already battered image of our chameleon-like prime minister, Kiichi Miyazawa. Miya*liar* is still suffering from a tainted image after his involvement in the Recruit scandal. He also has the bribery charges against his former faction secretary general Abe to live down, and the embarrassing fact that we've now discovered what a naff leader he is. The Sag[illegible]a scandal, which is bound to break over his head in the next few months, is just about the last thing he needs.

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN

"TASTELESS — that is the word for it," said Mr Morris Barton of the Medina Way Resident's Association, Newport, IoW, with reference to the white flag flying from the top of the council-approved flagpole and bearing, in large red letters, the word FUNERALS.

"The Hamilton Marshall undertakers should realise the flag is offensive," said Mrs Valerie Anderson, a Barton supporter. "Undertakers do not need flags. You are not just dropping in at a funeral parlour, are you?"

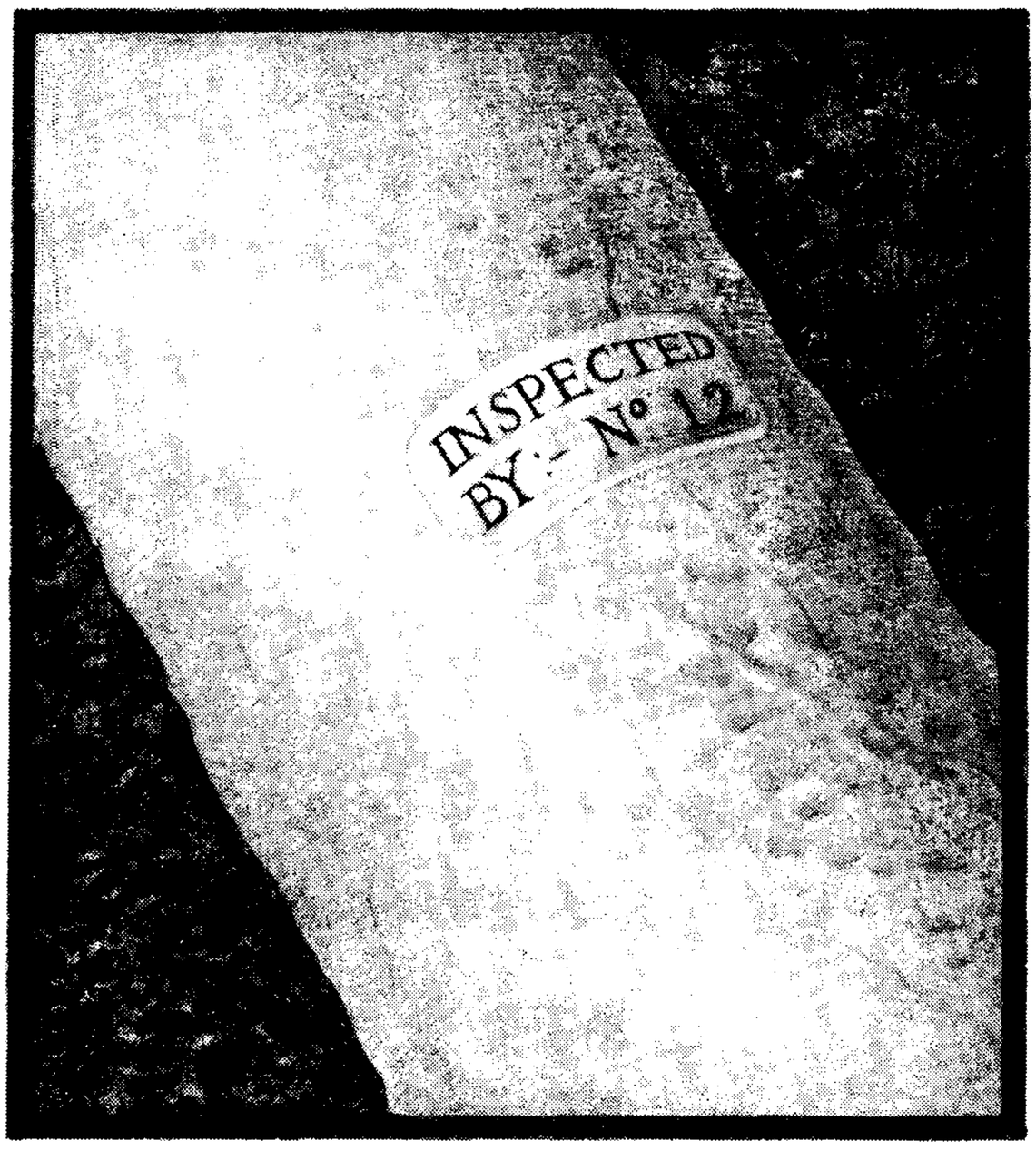
These views were echoed by Mrs Ivy Potts: "The flag flies directly opposite St Cross Court, the old people's home," she said. "For many of the residents, looking out of the window is a source of entertainment. Now they see FUNERALS — it's disgusting."

A spokesman for Hamilton Marshall agreed that their planning application for an illuminated tombstone at the foot of the flagpole had been turned down, but they were appealing against the refusal.

REPORTED to the Cape Town police by an employee of Independent Security Services, Mr James Ryder said: "I admit that I was take short in the Standard autobank centre, and, as there was nobody about, I took down my trousers and had a shit in a pot plant, quite forgetting that the video scanners were at work."

MR ALBERT Dingle, the founder of the Mid-Cheshire Gooseberry Show, has died, aged 85, at his home in Siddington.

Mr Dingle, who won the Association's trophy seven times in 31 years, was the only gooseberry grower to enter the *Guinness Book of Records*, with "Leviathan", a golfball-sized gooseberry that tipped the scales at 37 pennyweights and 15 grains (over two ounces) in 1978.



MR MICHAEL Pherond, a lawyer of Cane Street, Vancouver, has won £3,000 damages from the Index department store after injuring his penis on a pair of boxer shorts.

"I bought the shorts and put them on in my office," he said. "As I did so, the adhesive label, INSPECTED BY NO. 12, became attached to my penis. It would not budge, despite my efforts to remove it by sponging, rubbing with alcohol and picking. Eventually Dr James Double removed it with a special solvent, but this caused a rash, and, finally, a blemish of exactly the same shape as the sticker.

"I am not an unduly sensitive person, but I am proud of my penis, a decent and useful limb. Therefore I brought charges."

MR Ian Cleaves, an East Anglian publican, had almost £3,000 removed from his bank account by Lloyds, his bankers, to pay for a standing order he had cancelled, was then charged £75 for the resulting overdraft, and £25 per letter for the letters the bank wrote telling him, and his supposed debtors, of their mismanagement.

"I have been showing the letters around my pub," he said. "Otherwise nobody would have believed me."

INFORMATION: County Press, IoW 15.11.91; Cape Times 13.11.91; Space Press 19.12.91; The Lawyers Weekly, Ontario, 8.11.91; East Anglian Daily Times 14.11.91.

MONITORS: Richard Greenwood, Jo MacRobert, James H. Reeve, James W. Bannister, Donald M. McNicoll.

TOP TEN BORES

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on List
1	Melvyn Bragg	1	378
2	Gloria Steinem	–	–
3	Elton John	–	–
4	Sir Anthony Jay	3	78
5	Dirk Bogarde	5	395
6	Sir John Harvey Jones	4	78
7	Baroness Sear	10	3
8	Michael Portillo MP	–	4
9	Peter Sissons	7	438
10	Bryan Appleyard	–	734

This week's Bore compiled in association with the BBC's Anniversary Department

FINAL

The Daily Hellograph

40p

ESTABLISHED 1855 NO. 42,339

LONDON AND MANCHESTER

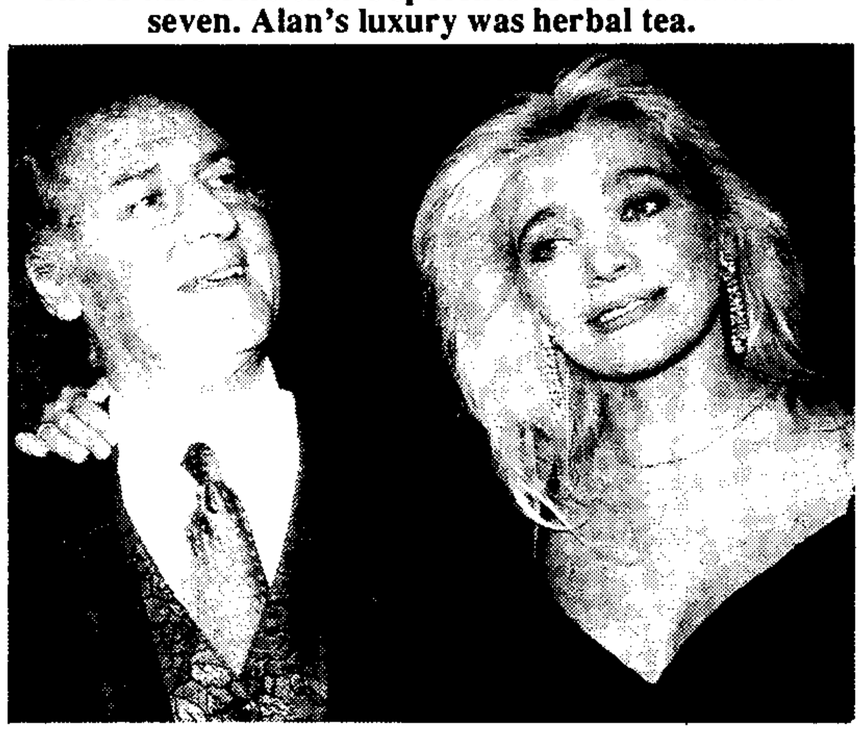
FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 1992

Desert Island Disco!

Heartwarming *Hellograph* pictures as fifty years of celebrity castaways toast radio's most heartwarming show

Photographs by "Call" Nikon Ross Captions by Jane Thynne-Stuff
Idea by Max Hastings

Top DJ Alan "Fluff" Freeman chats to Sir Robin Butler, Secretary to the Cabinet. Sir Robin asked for one of Mrs Thatcher's speeches as record number seven. Alan's luxury was herbal tea.



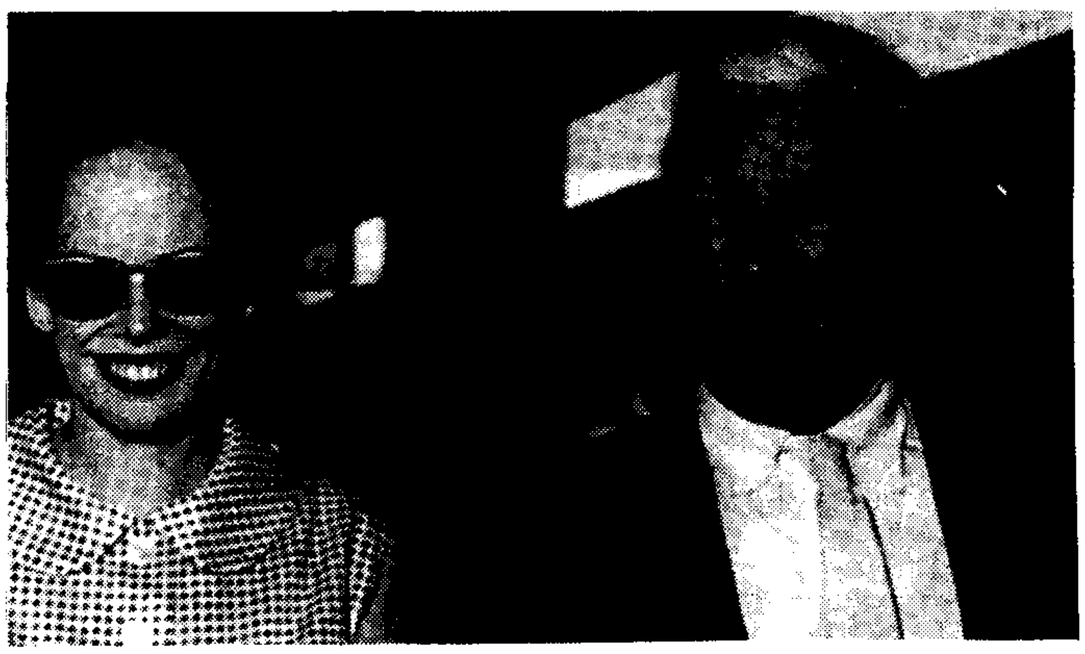
Broadcaster Benny Green with Gayle Hunnicut. Benny's book was *Not out! The Life of Don Bradman*, written by himself.

Top football star Ray Clemence teams up with famous Fatwah victim Salman Rushdie. As a special concession, Salman's episode was recorded in a safe house. He asked if he could take the Koran instead of the Bible. And Sue said yes.

Sir Peter Hall and Marlene Dietrich (castaway no. 13,704,152). "I've been on three times," says Marlene. "And every time I chose a bath of asses' milk as my luxury." Sir Peter Hall startled Roy Plomley by choosing eight Stockhausen records.

One-time student revolutionary Tariq Ali arrives with Rula Lenska (castaway no. 1794). Tariq created a stir when he chose The Red Flag as record number three.

Lord Forte shares a culinary castaway joke with TV chef Fanny Craddock. She annoyed Michael Parkinson by choosing a MagiMix food processor as a luxury. "Don't be daft," he said in a celebrated exchange. "There's no fookin' electricity on t'island." Shortly afterwards Michael left the show.



The late Reginald Bosanquet was the surprise guest, seen here arriving with Lady Olga Maitland. Asked if he would try to escape, Reggie replied: "Is there any booze in this studio?" The programme was never transmitted.

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Tuesday

The date of the general election has been officially decided by the Daily Telegraph. It is 9 April, which is a not inconsiderable relief to everybody. As for the Budget, it is to be on 10th March, which is also a great relief. The Telegraph did not, however, say what was going to be in the Budget, so I immediately went next door to ask Norma Lamont whether he knew. I

told him that I did not want there to be any accusations of trying to bribe the electorate, and that it was very important that we should be seen to be exercising wise and prudent stewardship insofar as it lay within our prerogative. "Quite so, Prime Minister," Norma replied. "We have never shrunk from unpopular measures. Why don't we cut income tax for everybody in the country?"

Wednesday

One of the most exciting things about the election is seeing the brilliant new posters which my friends Chris and David think up every day to beat the Labour Party. This morning they showed me their latest effort, which looked quite like the previous one except that this time the huge bomb was the other way up. On the side of the bomb it says IF YOU VOTE LABOUR, YOU'LL DIE. "But surely," I said, "Labour wants to ban the bomb?" "Quite right, Prime Minister," said Chris. "A very good point," said David. It is a good thing I am here to stop them making silly mistakes, and obviously neither of them minded being criticised since they were both laughing quite loudly as they left the room.

Thursday

A man called Mr Peter Brooke came to see me today. He offered me his resignation, which I politely accepted. "No, no," said Mr Hurd. "You are meant to refuse it." Sometimes it is very helpful to have someone around who knows about the protocol. I therefore insisted that Mr Brooke should stay on to do whatever he does, whenever it is he does it. When I asked Mr Brooke why he wanted to resign, he said that he had sung "Clementine" on television without knowing the words. In my judgement, that does not appear to be a matter to resign over. For instance, if I was asked to sing "Shrimp Boats Are A-Coming" by Miss Alma Cogan, which is one of my favourite songs, I would not get much beyond the first lines: "The shrimp boats are a-coming, the shrimp boats are a-coming, there'll be dancing tonight, oh yes."

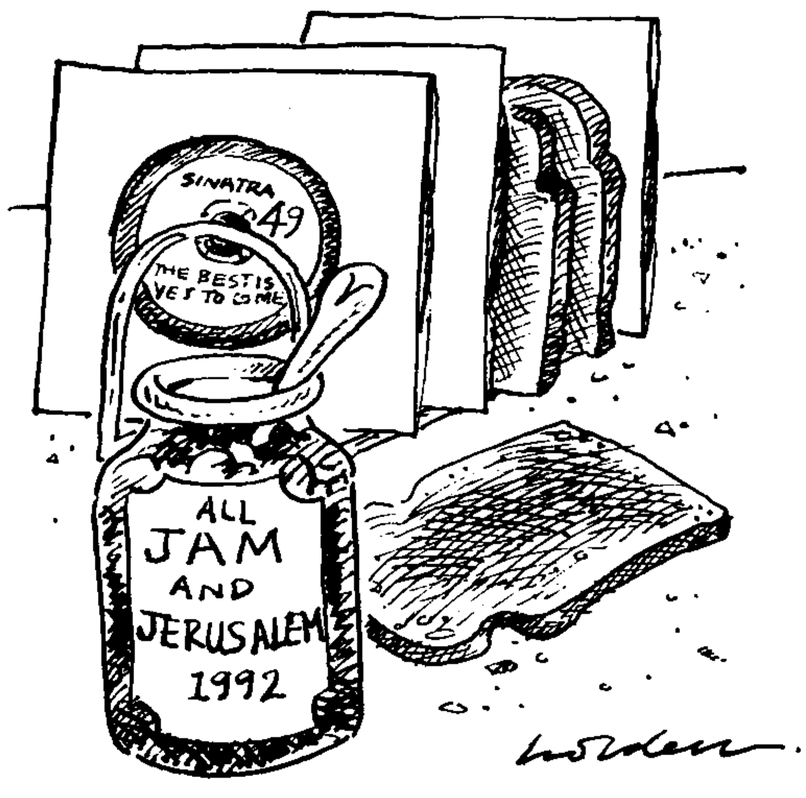
On the way home from the House of Commons I saw a huge poster showing a bomb and saying WATCH OUT FOR SUSPECT PACKAGES. This is a much better attack on the Labour Party than the last one. David and Chris will be glad they listened to my advice.

Friday

Today is D.I.D. Day. I am due at Broadcasting House at 11 o'clock and Mr O'Donnell arrived in plenty of time to give me my list of records and what to say in between.

It looks very interesting indeed and I look forward to hearing the records, many of which are new to me. I did however recognise what Mr O'Donnell had highlighted with a yellow pen as THE JOKES – i.e. "I suppose I could escape easily from the island in a balloon because I am the Prime Minister." This is an old favourite of his, as are all the others.

Ms Lawley was at first very pleasant but she kept introducing an unnecessary and not in any sense pleasant note by asking me to thank you-know-who for making me Prime Minister. Ms Lawley was



remarkably bossy about this and reminded me in no small measure of the woman who I do not ever mention. I certainly do not think Mrs Thatcher had anything to do with me getting on Desert Island Discs!

Sunday

As I listened to the programme at home I thought some of the recordings seemed not entirely judicious. For example, they left out the singing in "Land of Hope and Glory", which rather spoilt it, and also I could not understand why they had chosen Frank Sinatra when my favourite singer is Alma Cogan, especially "Shrimp Boats Are A-Coming".

Later I asked Mr O'Donnell about this who told me that the tune was significant because it was called "The Best Is Yet To Come".

I said that since it was the eighth record, there WAS no more to come. Mr O'Donnell can show remarkable obtuseness for a man with a Double-First.

Monday

Today I am due to fly out to meet Mr Yeltsin, or perhaps he is to fly in. As Mr O'Donnell says, the important thing is to have a photograph of us both near an aeroplane.

I explained to the Cabinet that the situation in Russia was in my judgement very grave. The economy was collapsing with unemployment rising, inflation increasing and their new leader in need of all the support he could get.

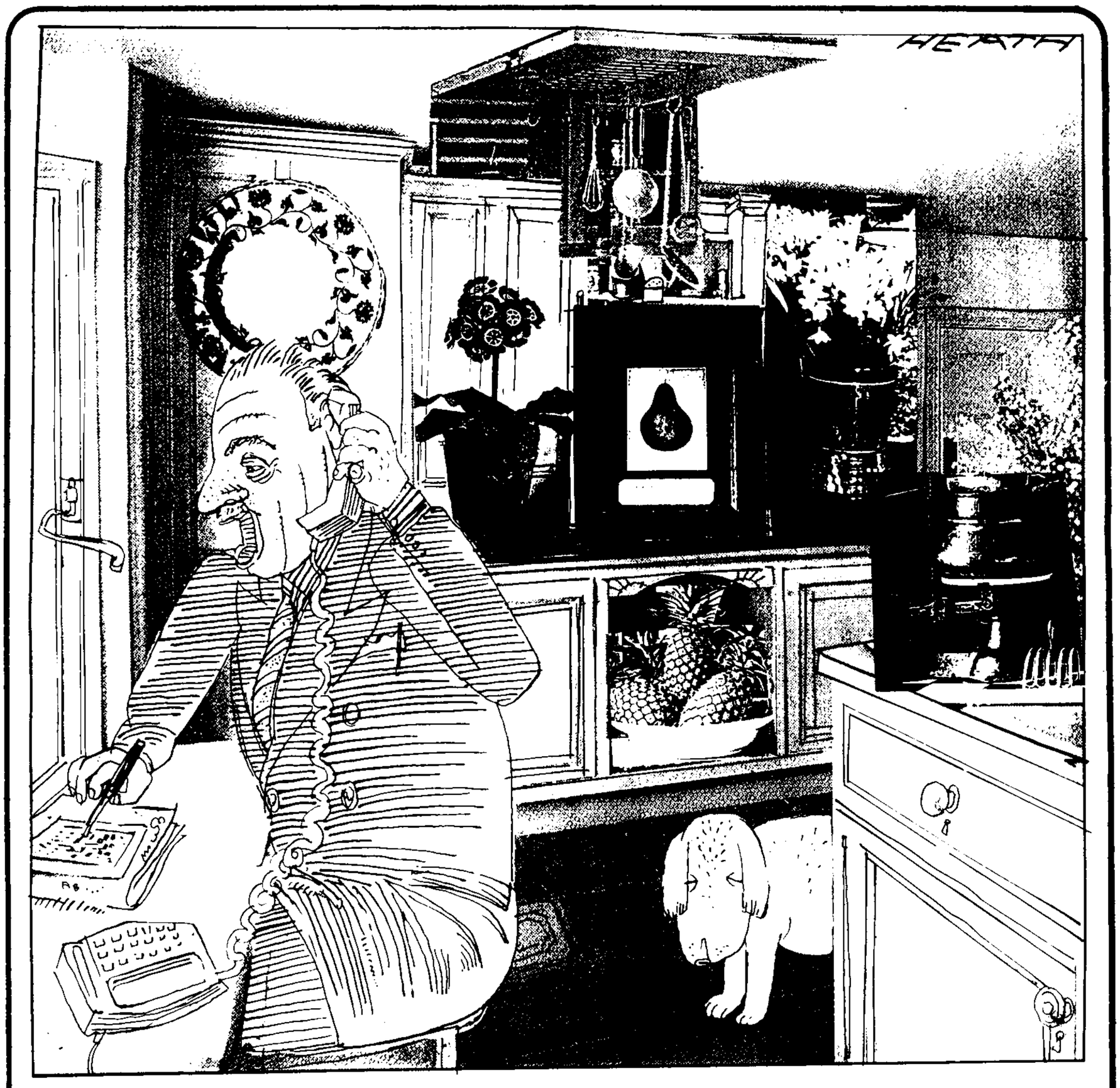
My friend Chris Patten gave a snigger, which I considered inappropriate in the circumstances. I put this down to the strain of thinking up a different poster every day to attack the Labour Party.

John Cole's Election Round-Up

Hondootedly Mostah Meejor Speculation Reaching Fever-Pitch ursa minor forty-niner excavating for a mine zippity-doo-da zebedee magic roundabout Mostah Kinnock On The Ropes jasminum nudiflorum silicone implant sinclair-stevenson faschings vank auf wien Mostah Lamont Bodget Cards Close To Chest reverend w. awdry andrea mantegna lord palumbo christopher columbus National Insurance Threshold Labour Bombshell Mostah Chris Patten shake'n'vac serendipity hot diggety peugeot the lion goes from strength to strength Mostah Roy Hattersley moicheal ignatieff pizzicato polka Likelihood Of Hung Parliament Olster Unionists Hold Tromp Card hugh montgomery massingberd thank goodness I'm retiring
(Cont. p. 94)

Jehovah's Witnesses

9 Brandon Road, Stanley
Telephone: 21267
Secretary - Mr A A Nutter



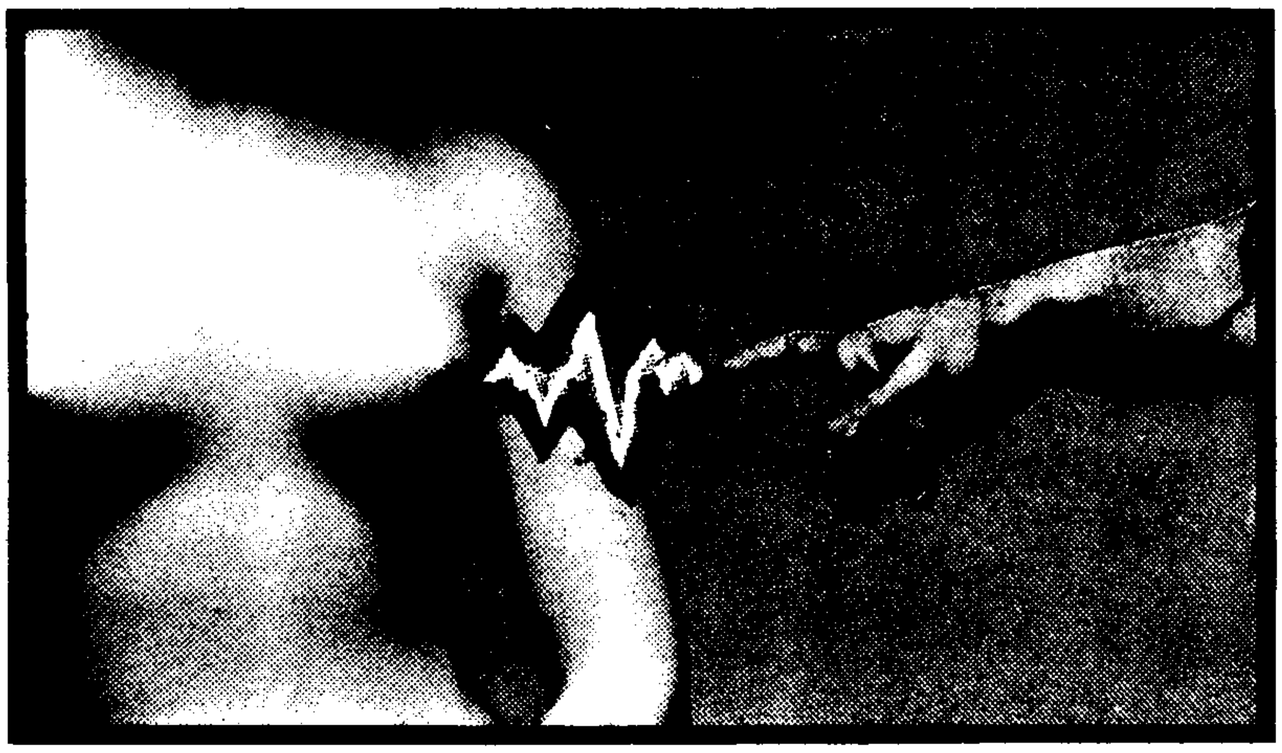
Great Bores Of Today.

"... No 3 across is Termagant I'm sure of that which means that there is a G in 5 down oh yes well done Sangria that must be it a type of drink is it? now I can't do the quotation at all I've never been too hot on *Measure For Measure* could you ask Maurice Stubbs at lunch he read English didn't he? 'weeds wither on the something bough' it starts with a V that's assuming that we're right about 'Avonmouth' being an anagram now there's one in the bottom right hand corner that foxed me completely one of those little four-letter jobs Blank Z Blank Q it must be some foreign word 'Fireman's mission interrupted in Peru' I've been through the dictionary and there's nothing there I bet they've got it wrong anyway we'll find out tomorrow oh didn't you get that one? That's very easy you see 'Worker' is ant and 'the Queen going backwards' is Anne making 'Antenna' which is 'on the roof' it's the first one I got shortly before the eight o'clock news at breakfast so just these three left then give me a ring this evening if you have any joy I'll be in don't worry if it's late sometimes they come to you in the middle of the night..."

Celeb

LIGGER

GARY, YOU DO INTEND BEING PRESENT AT THE BIRTH, DON'T YOU?
I WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR THE WORLD, BABES.
WELL I'VE DECIDED I WANT A TOTALLY NATURAL CHILD BIRTH WITH NO DRUGS OR PAINKILLERS WHATSOEVER.
ARE YOU SURE, DARLING? IT COULD BE A VERY LONG GRUELLING LABOUR.
I'M POSITIVE, GARY. I DON'T WANT THIS BIRTH TO BE JUST A BLURRED MEMORY. I WANT IT EXPERIENCED FULLY.
SPOILSPORT.
DROP



THE SOUTH BANK MANAGER SHOW

Introduced by MELVYN BARG

(Jazzed-up Paganini played by Julian Lloyds-Bank)

BARG: Tonight we look at the extraordinary career of myself, one of the giants of contemporary literature. In particular, we'll be promoting my new novel, *Dancing All The Way To The Bank*. Now this remarkable novel has been turned into a brilliant television series, thanks to an innovative adaptation by one of the most promising screen-writers of the age, myself. And here to advertise — I'm sorry, analyse — this major cultural event is Melvyn Barg.

(Cut to windswept man striding over huge mountains of money)

BARG *(for it is he):* Ever since I was a lad, I have loved these rolling green hills of pound notes. In my book I tell the story of how a middleaged man falls passionately in love with himself, and then seduces the BBC into giving him stacks of cash.

(Cut to violent pornographic rape scene which lasts for ten minutes. Cut away to two men sitting in BBC office watching same rape scene on video)

J. BIRT: Cor, this is steamy stuff, Melve. I don't remember it from the book.

BARG: Don't be daft, John, 'appen it's not in the book, tha' stoopid wazzock.

BIRT: Good thinking, Melve, 'cos the rest of the book was pretty dull, to say the least.

BARG: Don't tha' tell me what's what. Me, I'm bloody intellectual, I am. I'm boss of flagship arts programme, tha' knows.

BIRT *(impressed)*: Well, when I said it was dull, Melve, I didn't mean all the leg-over stuff. That's brilliant. Just what the BBC's looking for.

BARG: And what's more, my novel has been compared by Clive James, no less, to Nabonkov's *Loadsalolly* and D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Windermere's Fanny*.

(Birt hands over enormous cheque. Cut to Melvyn Bragg [played by Ronald Cockup] walking into branch of the Bank of Cumbria. WARNING: some viewers may find what follows distasteful. It involves explicit scenes of Melvyn Barg depositing a large sum of money in the bank)

MISS FROBISHER
(placing cup of tea on bank manager's desk): Good morning, Mr Chequecard. I've got Mr Barg outside. He's absolutely gasping to give it to you.

BANK MANAGER
(trembling): I can hardly wait. Could you leave us alone, please, Miss Frobisher? We've got to get down to it right away.

(Enter tousle-haired Cumbrian television personality. Romantic music swells to climax)

BARG *(breathing heavily):* I've never done this before. I don't know what to say. I don't know what to do.

(Takes fat cheque out of trousers in slow motion)

CHEQUECARD *(eyes boggling):* Good grief, I've never seen one that big before. It's the biggest I've ever seen.

BARG: You know what the great Cumbrian poet William Wordsworth wrote?

CHEQUEBOOK: No, no, Melvyn. Stop. Don't say anything. Just get on with it. You won't regret it.

BARG: Alright, alright. Here it is.

(Hands over cheque to bank manager, who faints in ecstasy. Cut back to Melvyn in LWT studio)

BARG: So there you have it, a work of genius and no mistake. That's all from *The South Bonk Show* this week, but don't forget — this programme will be discussed on tomorrow's *Start The Week* with guests Melvyn Barg, Ronald Cockup and myself.

(Viewers continue to watch video of Gremlins II)

"I call upon our President to open this meeting of the Thatcher Foundation"

His last voyage was to the coast of Guinea. He had been on board a slave ship, the captain's name Maxwell, where one man had been killed, a boy put to lodge with the pigs and was half eaten, one boy set to watch in the hot sun till he dropped down dead. He had been cast away in North America an. had travelled thirty days among the Indians, where he had been well treated. He had twice swum from a King's ship in the night and escaped. He said he would rather be in hell than be pressed. He was now going to wait in England to appear against Captain Maxwell. 'O he's a Rascal, Sir, he ought to be put in the papers!'

Dorothy Wordsworth's "Journal" of 1802

Maxwell Montes. Maxwell covers an area larger than Washington and Oregon, and stands almost 7 miles above the mean planetary radius. Maxwell's western slopes are very steep, while it descends gradually into the highlands of Fortuna Tessera on the east. Linear pull-apart features cover much of Maxwell's western half. Cleopatra is just to the right of center.

Mercury – The Journal of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific

Inspector Knicker to face new probe

by Our Man at the Met **Michael Fish** *(shurely shome mishtake? Ed)*

INSPECTOR Knacker of the Yard Knacker has called for a new inquiry into the case of top policewoman Inspector Knicker of the Yard, who was recently suspended after allegations of "grossly improper behaviour unbecoming in a senior police officer".

It is alleged that Inspector Alison Knicker, 53, "took down" a number of statements in full view of witnesses.

Said Inspector Knacker: "I do not expect senior members of the Force to go around jumping head first into cases that they could solve wearing nothing but their uniforms.

"Despite the fact that Inspector Knicker has been found innocent of all charges, this has never stopped us before," said the controversial Inspector, "and we're going to drum her out of the Force."

Advertisement

(This space was originally booked by Benidorm, the Italian knitwear manufacturers. We have however decided to drop the advertisement on the grounds of taste. The picture showed a group of Benidorm executives having lunch and thinking up another ad campaign. This was deemed by us to be offensive and sick, as indeed were most of the men following the lunch.)

The Highway Code

HMSO 75p

Issued by the Department of Transport and ignored by Ministers in other Departments

Maximum speed 70mph

That's 70, Mr Clark

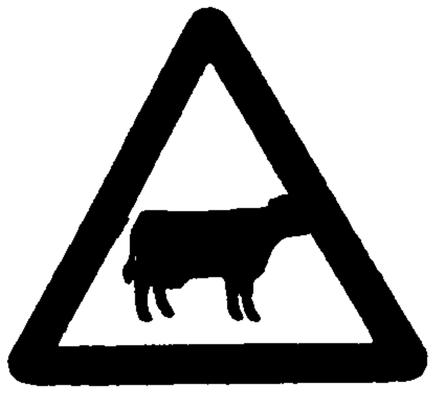
Can't you read? It's 70 as in *not* 98

Stop, you mad bastard. You're going to kill someone

Danger. Defence Procurement Minister in Porsche

Gotcha!

Tell the police you're a frightfully important security risk connected to the armed services



Come up with a load of bull about thinking you were being escorted

Start swearing when they don't believe you

Buy a bicycle, matey, you're going to need it

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: The Duchess Fergiana has received adverse publicity as a result of her friendship with Texan oil billionaire Woody Wyatt Jr.

Now read on...

THE gold-embossed Royal Hotline telephone trilled urgently in Charles's study at Highgrove. His new research adviser, Melinda Harpey, extended a beautifully manicured hand to pick up the receiver and put it close to her exquisite ear. "The personal phone of Charles Windsor, Melinda Harpey speaking. Who shall I say is calling?"

There was an icy silence at the other end followed by a terse message.

"We are the Queen. Bring my son to the phone at once, whoever you are."

The young raven-haired environmental consultant placed her fingers over the mouthpiece. "It's your mother, Chucky," she whispered.

Sometimes, Charles felt, Melinda was perhaps a little over-familiar but it was no doubt something to do with her background in what they called Public Relations. His own relations, however, were more of a problem. He took the phone and listened. "Have you seen the papers, Charles? Well I suggest you look at them at once. The behaviour of your sister-in-law has been..."

Charles opened the *Daily Mail* to see a large photograph of Fergiana with an airline sick bag over her head throwing miniature portions of Silly Cow processed cheese at her father and the Concorde pilot.

"Appalling?" he ventured.

"You've to do something about it at once, Charles." The Queen's voice was at its most imperial. "You realise it's my 40th anniversary shortly. And this ill-mannered gel of Andrew's and her fast friends are going to ruin everything."

The monarch's shrill tones were clearly audible to the lissome Ms Harpey who pulled a comic face and made "yackety-yak" gestures with her hand.

"Well, Mater," he stammered. "I have spoken to Fergie in the past and to be fair to her she has lost a lot of weight and that sort of thing..."

"I don't care what she looks like. I won't have her creating any more scandal in this family."

"Well perhaps I *could* talk to her father," Charles offered weakly. "An older man often has a sort of gravitas thingie. There was something about it in that book you know that I gave you for Christmas — *Tales Of The Squirrel Men* by Sir Laurens van der Post, about the chaps who live in the trees and eat nuts... er... anyway the older ones when winter comes have to tell the younger ones to put their nuts away."

Melinda, for some reason, began to snigger. He would have to have a quiet word with her later.

"They have a saying, Mater: 'The young may carry the nuts, but only the old know where to put them.' That's very true, Mater, isn't it Mater?... Mater?... Mater?..." But the line had gone dead.

THE shower room of Royal Rowntree's Polo Club emptied, leaving Charles alone with his friend and manager Major Ferguson. As the two men dried themselves vigorously amidst the steam and the smell of "Embonpoint" male cologne, the major slapped Charles on the back. "First class yukka in the second fatwa, Sir. You really showed the Paul Raymond Casuals what for."

Charles laughed. "It was nothing. Bit of luck. Anyway, Major, there was something I wanted to raise with you."

The Major, who was blow-drying his hair, leant forward to listen to his clearly embarrassed young friend. "Fire away, Sir."

"To come to the point... er... Major... er... well obviously... I know we're members of the Royal Family but we all have these er... sort of urges and desires... er... we're only human after all."

The major turned off the dryer and began to concentrate on what Charles was saying.

"The important thing is if you must give in to these sort of thingies... er... is to be frightfully discreet... it all gets into the papers so quickly... and then everyone sort of knows and it's terribly bad for the whole Royal show, as it were, you know what I'm talking about, don't you?"

The major tapped his nose conspiratorially. "Indeed I do, Sir. Discretion is my middle name."

He got up and took a card from his crocodile-skin "Dundee" wallet. Charles was baffled as he read it to himself.

"Wigmore Massage Club. Lovely Girls. Absolute Discretion Guaranteed."

"Just mention my name," said the major with a wink. "They'll give you a secret code name. I'm 'Fergie's Dad' but you can be anything you like. Just turn up and leave the rest to them."

A hot gust of steam suddenly engulfed the Major and, when it cleared, he had gone, leaving behind only the faint odour of Embonpoint.

(To be continued)

MARQUESS OF BLANDFORD NOT ARRESTED SHOCK

by Our Crime Staff
Sue Crook and Call Nick Rozzer

IN A sensational development yesterday the police revealed that they had not arrested the Marquess of Blandford.

The controversial heir to the Duke of Marlborough was not taken to any police stations, nor was he charged with any of the following offences:

- **Joyriding around Blenheim Estate at 140 mph.**
- **Smashing in the door of the luxury home of a former girlfriend.**
- **Possession of 400 tons of the "designer drug" Ecstasy.**
- **Possession of a wife who poses in *Tatler* in her knickers.**

Said Inspector "Morse" Knacker of the Thames Valley CID: "We have been keeping an eye on His Lordship for some time but suddenly yesterday he took us by surprise. He got up late and then he did nothing criminal at all. My men were left standing there now knowing what to do."

A close friend of the Blandfords told us: "I cannot understand it. It is totally out of character. Normally Jamie would be pissed or stoned and would be breaking at least one law every hour. I don't know what's got into him."

The Duke of Marlborough issued a statement yesterday threatening to disinherit his son unless he "pulled himself together" and started acting "in the irresponsible manner expected of the aristocracy".

Jamie Blandford is 13¼.

BCCI creditor to be paid in full

by Our City Correspondent
Fred Needle

ONE BCCI creditor is to be paid in full, the official liquidator announced last night.

Champagne corks popped in EC3 as the news came through that the liquidator had managed to discover sufficient funds to pay himself.

Call Touche Ross

"I am delighted," he told his wife on the phone. "I'll be back on the 7.23 and we'll go out to celebrate at that new French place in Esher."

"Bloody hunt saboteurs"

AUCTION

GNOMEBY'S

Sale Of A Gentleman's Effects

14 February 10.00am

Lot 1
5 cases of Finest KGB Caviar plus spoon inscribed "Bob, from your old friend Leonid". *(Est: £70-£80)*

Lot 2
A similar Lot

Lots 3-70
More similar Lots

Lot 71
Luxury penthouse walk-in fridge for storing the above *(Est: £130)*

Lot 72
Personal crane for lifting and setting down of large individuals — for use with armchair, bath, bed, toilet etc. Manufactured in East Germany. Comes with batteries and instruction manual. *(Est: £25-£35)*

Lot 73
One Dictator-Size (18ft x 18ft) Bed ("The Ceaucescu") on concrete base. Comes with secretary. *(Est: £15-£20)*

Lot 74
One biography of R. Maxwell by Joe Haines. Signed by the author "R. Maxwell". *(Est: 5p-6p)*

Lot 74-178
Similar Lots. *(Est: £1-£2)*

Lot 179
One Ice-Cream Maker (Sir Peter Jay). *(Est: £2,000 per week)*

Lot 180
One Bacon-Slicer (Joe Haines). *(Est: 30 pieces silver)*

Lot 181-300,000,181
300 million unsold copies of *The European*. *(Est: 3p-4p)*

Lot 300,000,182
One wall safe (empty). *(Est: £0.0p)*

GNOMEBY'S

PETER McLIE

The World's Worst Columnist

HAVE you noticed that, whilst all the other months of the year have at least 30 days, February has only a measly 28?

And an even more curious fact. This year, for some obscure reason, the powers-that-be have laid down that February should have not its usual ration of 28 days, but 29.

I suspect the dread hand of M. Jacques Delors at work here. Don't you?

☐ *FERGIE is in the news again. I read in my own column yesterday that she has been cavorting on an aeroplane, in the company of her father.*

Surely it is time journalists stopped giving this foolish young woman the oxygen of publicity.

Anyone would think from the coverage she gets that she was a member of the Royal Family.

☐ **I READ in the above paragraph yet another reference to Fergie.**

How much more of the Duchess of York can we take?

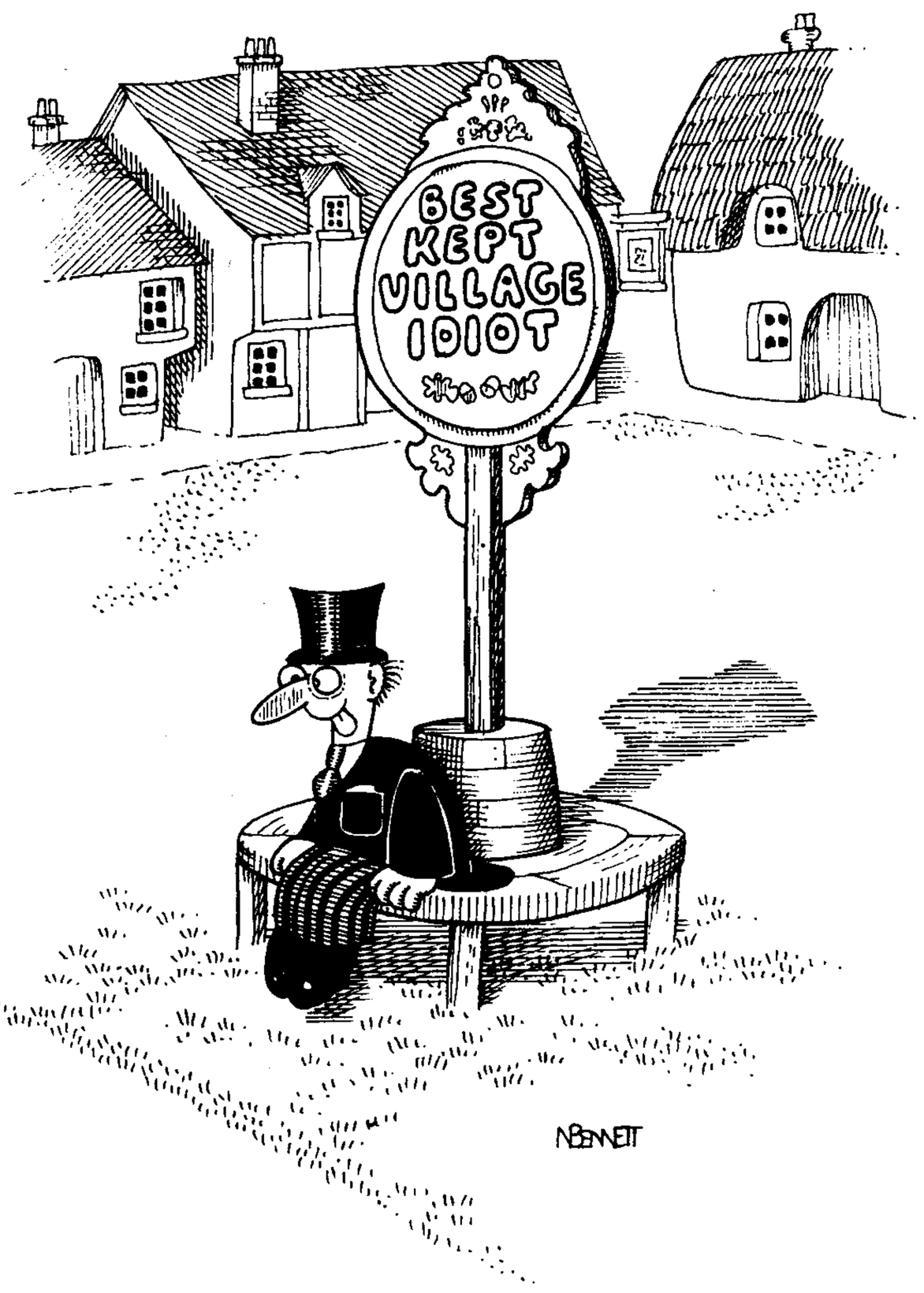
No wonder the Queen is upset.

☐ HAVE you seen that odious creep Jacques Delors in the papers of late?

In my view he is the worst editor *Private Eye* has ever had.

He is like a slimy dead sheep stuffed down the back of a sofa.

You're fired. Ed.



BROTHERS REMAIN SILENT

House of Commons Sensation

by Our Political Staff **Maxwell Hastings**

THE BROTHERS (Neil and Roy) shocked the House of Commons today when they refused to answer questions about their financial affairs.

As MPs pressed them with a stream of queries relating to taxes, pensions and shares, the Brothers both sat stony-faced, only whispering from time to time to their lawyer, John Smith QC.

Finally Mr Smith said that his clients were faced with a possible general election and that they did not want to incriminate themselves at this stage.

George Carmen is very rich.

How They Are Related

HRH The Duchess Fergiana

Stevenson Wyatt Earp III

Nell Gwynn
|
Briony Redhead
|
Scarlett O'Hara
|
Fergie the Bogeywoman
|
Susannah Yorkiebar
|
Susan "Yorkie" Barrantes
|
Peter York
|
Major Ron Todd
|
Sarah Ferguson, 1st Duchess of Pork

J.R. Ewing
|
J.R. Hartley
|
Y.O. Wyatt
|
Woodrow Wyatt
|
Woodrow Wilson
|
A.N. Wilson
|
Larry Fortensky
|
Stevie Wonder
|
Steve Wyatt Earp III

All proceeds (13p) from this family tree will go to charity

HANZ-Z-Z-ARD

Question Time. 2.30pm

Sir Bufton Tufton (Lymeswold, Con): In view of the forthcoming election, does the Prime Minister agree that the Labour Party's tax proposals would cause mass starvation in the capital this winter?

Mr John Major (Job-on-Lyne, Con) *(leaping to feet holding clipboard):* Yes sir. No sir. Three bags full, sir.

(Tory cheers, Labour boos)

Mr Neil Windbag (Flannelly, Lab): Could the Right Honourable Gentleman, the Prime Minister, tell the House just why it is that, according to the latest figures published by the independent analysts Goldsack Winebar, the average annual rate of growth across the Community has been consistently *(looks hard at scrap of paper and tries to read John Smith's handwriting)* 3.6 per cent higher than achieved in the last three years by this discredited, disintegrating and disgraceful government?

(Labour cheers and cries of "Has he finished the question yet?")

Mr John Major *(leaping nimbly to feet):* Yes sir. No sir. Three bags full, sir.

(Wild Tory cheers)

Mr Paddington Ashtray *(Weevil, Lib-Dem.-Bones-Dem-Bones):* As a former Royal Marine, I would just like to deplore the pathetic inter-party sniping that has so far characterised this election campaign. I hereby give a pledge that we in the Liberal-Democratic Party would never sink so low as to engage in the kind of childish name-calling displayed by the leaders of the two main parties, the faceless twit Major and the flatulent fool Kinnock.

(Lib-Dem cheer)

Mr Peter Brooke (Foot-in-Mouth, Con): I would like to offer my deepest and most sincere apologies to the House for my tactless and insensitive singing of the song *Clementine* on the Dublin television show *Gay Chatline* at 2.30 last Wednesday morning. I now realise that this was a very grievous error of judgement, and I would like to offer my resignation to the Prime Minister.

(Tory MPs take out onions in mass display of grief-struck hypocrisy)

Mr J. Major *(banging clipboard on dispatch box):* I would like to refer my honourable friend to my previous answer: Yes sir. No sir. Three bags full, sir.

Rev Ian Looney (Paisley, Ulster Democratic Anti-Papist Unionist): The Secretary of State has been guilty of a most heinous and mortal crime against the whole people of the province of Northern Ireland. In all the history of outrages that have stained the bloodstained pages of the annals of our sad and troubled land, there is no single act of criminal barbarity to compare with the cowardly singing of *Clementine* on the *Gay Switchboard Show*.

(Runs across floor of House and attempts to attack Brooke with heavy leatherbound volume of King William III Bible)

Sir Creepy Crawley *(Seat-Under-Threat, Con):* May I just say that we on the Government benches fully appreciate and understand the very real feelings of outrage expressed by the Rev Looney, whose opinions and indeed support we might be in a position to value so greatly in the event of a hung parliament when we are ten seats short?

(House empties as members run to nearest bar at thought of Paisley holding balance of power)

Old Mogg's Almanack

Compiled by Ye Noſtradamus of Frome, viz. Wm Reeſ-Mogg Eſq, Gent of ye County of Somerſet

IN March ye conjunction of Saturn and Uranus will produce a Great Depreſſion over the entire globe. Ye houſe-market will ſeize up, even in Somerſet. All manufacturies and merchants will become bankrupted. All money will be declared worthless. I adviſe all shareholders to buy 2¼% Conſols. and to retire to their wine-cellars.

IN April hurricanoes will blow down great buildings, including ye Houſe of Parlt. Jupiter in ye cuſp of Mars portends a mighty conflict between ye nations. Millions will die from ye plague and man-eating mammoths, unſeen since ye Ice Age, will roam ye streets of ye City of London. 2¼% Conſols. will become worthless. I adviſe all my readers to ſell all that they have and give to the poor (ſhurely ſhome miſhtake? Ed).

IN June ye correſpondence of Mercury and ye planet Telecom portends a complete breakdown of all computer syſtems, portable telephones etc. English tennis players will fail at Wimbledon. Immenſe ſnakes, ſeveral million miles long, will creep out from under ye beds. I adviſe all my readers to take to ye woods, but to beware of ye killer owls.

IN Auguſt ye partial eclipſe of ye moon on the 27th portends that ye *Independent* newſpaper shall ceaſe publication. This ſurely portends ye end of ye world. Due to ye global warming ye oceans will engulf every nation and all will be drowned, ſave one. Gueſs who?

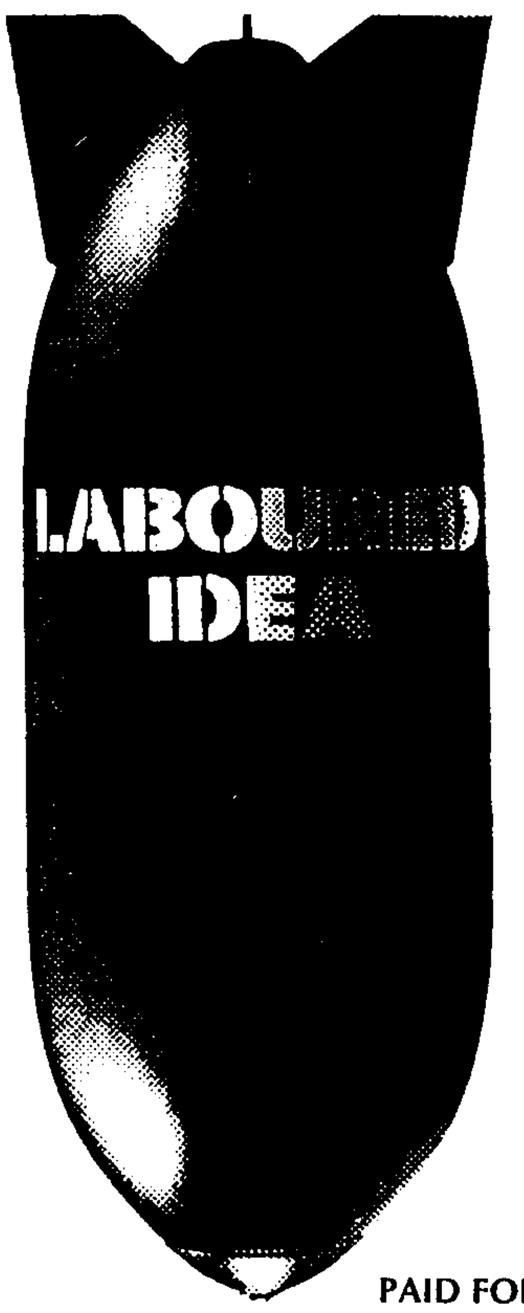
Wm Rees-Mogg
The Icke Inſtitute of Forecaſting
Mars

IN TODAY'S HELLOGRAPH

Conrad Trades Up

New comic character joins Telegraph

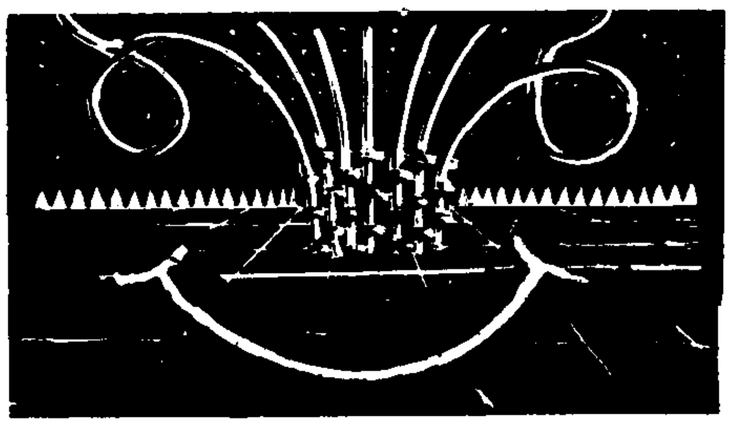
Follow the adventures of wealthy man-on-the-make Conrad Black. This week Conrad throws his old wife into the bin and begins an affair with up-market Barbara Amiel.



UNDER THE TORIES VERY AVERAGE AD MEN MAKE A BOMB

PAID FOR BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

DIARY



THE RT. HON. LORD CALLAGHAN OF CARDIFF, KG, PC

As one who fought — if I may say so — an outstandingly successful General Election campaign as Prime Minister back in 1979, I feel it incumbent upon me at this juncture to offer Mr Kinnock a word or two of good old-fashioned advice in his ear.

Let me make it plain at this stage that I have nothing but the highest opinion of Mr Kinnock as an up-and-coming young politician of some ability. He has a pleasant manner, a cheerful disposition, and, I am led to believe, a reasonably good singing voice. I have no doubt whatsoever that he compares quite favourably with some of the long-serving Labour backbenchers of old.

His utter lack of experience at the helm of Government should on no account be held against him, and I hear tell that he has a knowledge of what my grandchildren call "rock and roll" — no bad thing when it comes to dealing with the younger generation!

My advice to Mr Kinnock, then, is to pay heed to the means by which my own Labour administration — one of the most remarkable success stories in our nation's history, or so they inform me — made such an impact on the hearts and minds of the country when it came to polling day in 1979. First and foremost, we never let the leaders of the Trades Unions — the representatives, let us not forget, of the ordinary, decent working people of this country — feel that they were in any way neglected. Not a bit of it.

I well remember marvellous old trades union characters such as David Basnett and Hugh Scanlon sitting with their feet up on their desks in my office in Number 10 in that marvellous long winter of '79. Meanwhile, I brewed them up piping hot cups of tea, offered them a generous selection of Peak Frean biscuits and did everything in my power to make them feel at home. As a consequence, they were tremendously accommodating to my wishes, allowing me a free rein to use the office telephone for local calls, to sign letters, to authorise massive Government expenditure and so on in a very pleasant corner of a neighbouring room. This, let there be no doubt, was practical socialism.

By the end of my — and I say this in all modesty — internationally regarded administration we had accrued such a firm measure of support from your ordinary working blokes that even when they died they did whatever they could to remain unburied. Travelling the length and breadth of the country, I would often see these ordinary, decent corpses lined up on either side of the road, greeting the fellow they had come to know as "Sunny Jim", silently urging me on to a convincing Labour victory come Polling Day. And let me tell you this. If those unburied corpses from that outstanding winter of '79 had been allowed a vote — and I argued privately at the time that they most certainly should have been — there is not the smallest doubt in my mind that Labour would have been assured a landslide victory. If Mr Kinnock can muster the deceased to signal their support for him by taking to the streets in such a fashion, he can be assured of similar success come Polling Day.

Throughout my term in office, I never saw Her Majesty the Queen anything less than sparkling and vivacious. My weekly meetings with that estimable lady were one of the great highlights of my career in Labour politics. May I now, in all modesty, salute, through recourse to anecdote of an intensely personal nature, that outstandingly gracious and — if I may say so — thoroughly aristocratic lady as we greet the 40th anniversary of her accession to the throne.

It was while I was busy hammering out a scheme to give the poor people in our community a better deal that my secretary told me Buckingham Palace was on the line. "Let's allow the poor people in our country to sort things out for themselves for once" I informed my colleagues, adjourning the meeting as I hastened to the phone.

It was the Queen's own Private Secretary, wishing to speak to me personally, a signal honour at any time, never more so, I might add, than when one is up to one's neck in the problems of the underprivileged!

"Her Majesty requests your presence at Balmoral this weekend," he said. "Please remember to bring a bag containing bathroom requisites, washing-up gloves, barbecue implements and change of apron."

The weekend demonstrated the very strong measure of personal support upon which I could rely from Her Majesty, and I say in all modesty that I thoroughly enjoyed myself. My duties were minimal — a little beating the bushes for those who were shooting pheasants, a certain amount of washing-up after the evening meal, some light barbecuing for the family, and a token rummage through the Castle cess-pit for minor blockages — and I was well rewarded for my efforts by coming into such close contact with the natural graciousness and good breeding of Her Majesty.

A delightful footnote to this memorable occasion: as I took my leave of Her Majesty on that famous gravel drive, she most kindly requested that I get up off my knees. She then said something I thought most notable for its thoughtfulness. "I have long believed it incorrect," she said, "to 'tip' my Prime Minister for his services over a weekend. But I will strongly recommend you to my sister, who requires a little someone to pop in this summer." And that was how I came to spend a most enjoyable couple of days sweeping the Royal pool on the sun-soaked island of Mustique that summer! Magical memories among marvellous ordinary folk, to whom Audrey and I still send a good number of Christmas cards each year.

Flatteringly, my personal reputation among the ordinary voters was — and remains — quite exceptionally high. They see me, I like to think, as a decent sort of fellow who could take this country out of recession, put an end to what I would call wildcat strikes, and spot a crisis as and when one arose. If I hadn't had the country right behind me, I doubt frankly whether the Labour Party would have done nearly so well in the '79 election, but that's another story.

Mistakes? Yes — I've made one or two over the length of a long and successful political career, but I've never been afraid to admit 'em, unlike those of my colleagues such as Jenkins, Castle, Healey, Benn (none of them, incidentally, notable for their loyalty). I've always thought it was a grave mistake on my part not to stay on as Labour Party Leader to fight a further three elections: in hindsight, it seems pretty clear to most commentators that, under me, the Labour Party would have romped home. Nevertheless, I look forward to some hearty campaigning come April on behalf of poor Mr Kinnock. "Let's revive the spirit of '79!" is my campaign slogan, and from where this ordinary, decent sort of bloke is sitting it looks a sure-fire winner, oh, yes indeed!

ARE YOU SURE THAT YOU ARE REALLY A NINETIES FIGURE ARSLIX?
YES CLIVE, I'M WORTH AT LEAST THE £90,000 THAT THE BRILLIANT DAILY TELEGRAPH IS PAYING ME.
Alex sucks up to The Daily Telegraph from January 20th
the Daily Telegraph

Literary Review

Fen and ink

New Writing
Edited by Malcolm Bradbury & Judy Cooke
(Minerva, £6.99)

ENGLISH literature, as currently constituted, has any number of self-appointed guardians: Malcolm Bradbury, Professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia, is perhaps the grandest of its grand panjandrums.

Novelist, critic, Booker Prize eminence, originator of the UEA's much trumpeted creative writing course, he exerts an incalculable thraldom over the state of what in an earlier generation used to be called English Letters, an influence that extends through countless arid byways of EngLit and takes in any amount of patronage and beneficent wire-pulling.

Bradbury's children, consequently, can be found almost everywhere: pale, flinty statues rising up to dominate the dusty landscape of the bookshops. It is a power brokerage that extends not only to living writers — McEwan, Ishiguro and other UEA graduates too numerous to mention — but even to the dead.

The Angus Wilson revival, for example, which kicked into gear on television last year and will shortly proceed by way of publicised reissues, is almost entirely the consequence of Bradbury bending some kindly-disposed ears in publishing and TV. Do we need an Angus Wilson revival? It's a moot point; but Bradbury and a few like-minded chums will see that we get one, never fear.

The Bradbury message about the enduring health of English literature — a health which, let it be said, has been called into question a few times in recent years — is relentlessly up-beat, uncritical and inclusive. One of the salient features about his introduction to *New Writing*, with its chatter about "strong new generations", is the number of names he manages to cram in. The other is a marked espousal of fashionable notions of de-centring and "pluralism". Pluralism turns up quite a lot here. English Literature as an entity scarcely exists of course and "the dominant characteristic of new writing is its variety and pluralism, its multiplicity of expression, its breadth of voices".

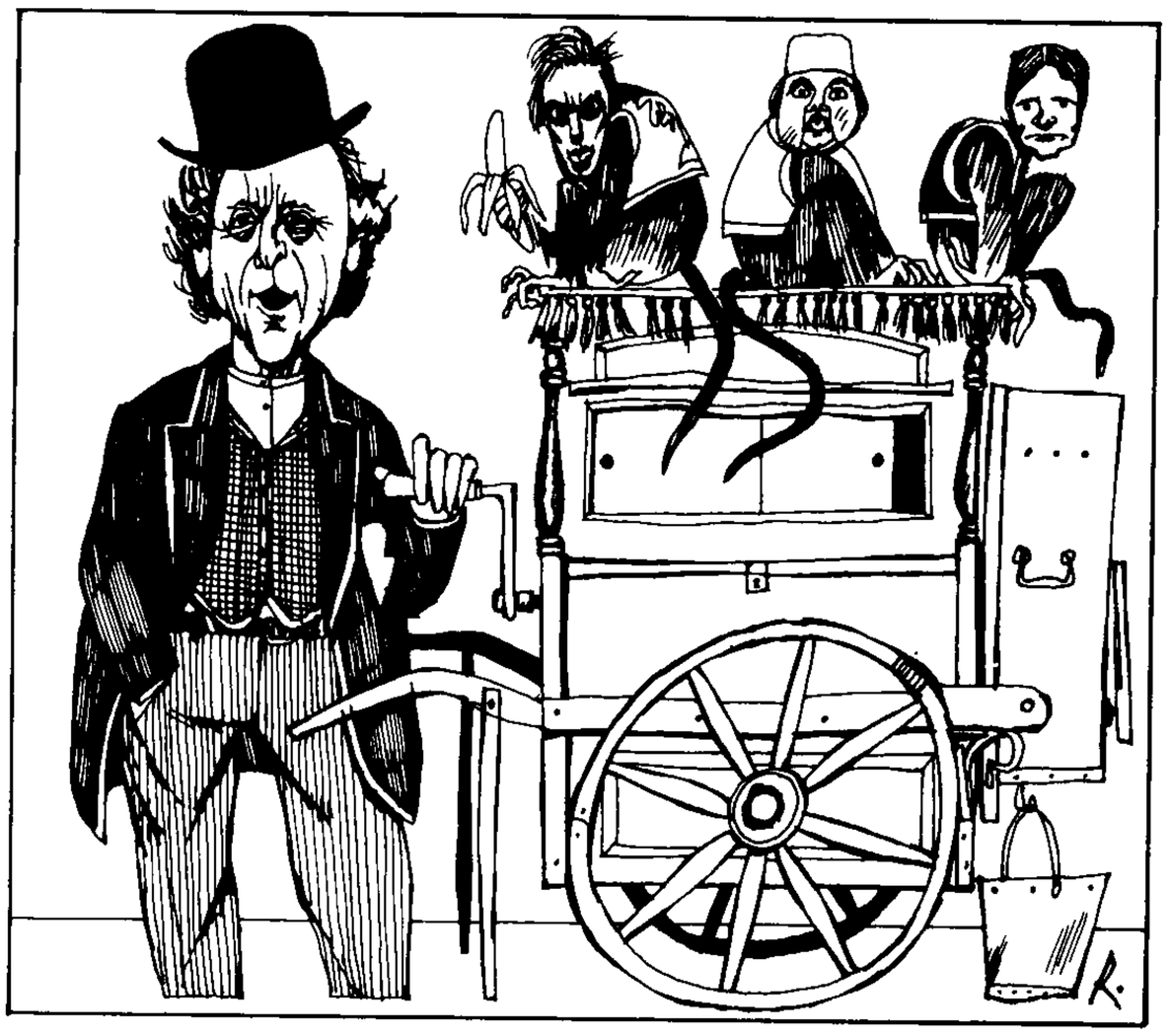
Curious then that a trawl through the pages of this handsomely produced, British Council-sponsored paperback, with their promise of variety and multiplicity, should disclose such a queer narrowness of range. Of course we're all terribly ethnic these days, not to mention regional; so it's perhaps just a teeny oversight that there are in a collection of 40 writers just three colonials, one Irishman, one Welshman and a single Scot, the latter (Alasdair Gray) well past his sell-by date, and Doris Lessing to provide a whiff of the un-English.

An oversight too, certainly not an auspicious piece of pluralism, that nearly everybody here has some not very tenuous connection with Malcolm Bradbury. Christopher Bigsby and Lorna Sage? Colleagues from the UEA. Rose Tremain and Suzannah Dunn? Ancient and modern graduates, respectively, of the UEA creative writing school. David Lodge? An old back-slapping chum from way back.

But the truly deplorable feature of *New Writing* is its obviousness, its odd generic quality, the distressing way in which it reinforces all those wicked and of course erroneous prejudices that so many of us now share about the state of modern British writing. Interviews with Martin Amis, bits of Graham Swift's dreary new novel — for God's sake, the cry goes up, find us somebody else for a change, somebody a bit less self-admiring (pieces by Lucy Ellmann and Adam Zameenzad followed by Valentine Cunningham puffing Lucy Ellmann and Adam Zameenzad; David Lodge followed by Peter Kemp puffing David Lodge) — something a bit less redolent of the current dodgy state of British writing. The impression of a cosy little club, entrance fee now lowered to accommodate the Commonwealth, in which everybody thinks everybody else is just *dandy*, is quite invincible.

Fortunately one or two pieces — an A.S. Byatt story and a rallying cry by Ben Okri — transcend these limitations. Others — notably a tremendous piece of narcissistic breast-beating by Geoff Dyer — compound them. Presumably the blank pages which ruin stories by James Lasdun and Doris Lessing are printers' cock-ups rather than daring attempts at experimental truncation.

The really depressing thing, though, is the British Council imprimatur, which means that the book will be exported all over the place as an example of sparkling national excellence, when it is, in fact, an exposure of a profound *sectional* failure.



Books & Bookmen

■ SOMETHING is rotten in the state of the Ian St James Awards run, with increasing resentment, by HarperCollins.

What started out as a sop to St James, a lacklustre "adventure" novelist who fancies his abilities more than most of his readers do, has turned into an administrative nightmare.

For the 1991 awards, the competition's third year, would-be entrants were asked to accompany each story with a cheque for £5 and in return a detailed critique of every story submitted would be provided. 4,000 stories were submitted and thus HarperCollins' coffers were increased by £20 000.

Disgruntled authors are deluging Box 1371, which poses as the Ian St James Trust, with letters demanding the long-awaited critiques. Cheques were immediately cashed a year ago, although neither they nor the stories were acknowledged.

Realising that the credibility of the enterprise is in jeopardy, the trust inserted a small ad in the last issue of *Writers' Monthly*: "Anyone who has not received a critique should contact Graham Taylor, Administrator of the Awards, who will try to resolve any difficulties." Again the box number is given. HarperCollins employees are not permitted to reveal Graham Taylor's telephone number, perhaps because he is St James' son.

□ **PETER DAVIS, chief executive of Reed International, reveals in an interview in the current *Bookseller* that the decision to "invest" in Sinclair-Stevenson Ltd "came very much from Richard Charkin".**

Poor Sir Sincere wandered from lunch table to dinner table saying that nothing would change, that he would remain completely in charge of his new outfit until, in about eight years' time, he'd settle into gentle retirement and write the odd sub-Peter Mayle tome on France.

But events have occurred in the last week or so which suggest life is not quite working out that way.

"Struwwelpeter" Charkin insisted that Sincere took on board the downmarket women's fiction editor Caroline Upcher a few months ago, and she's just signed up Julie Burchill's next two novels for, appropriately, Mickey Mouse money. Worst of all, the two "booksellers" on Sir Sincere's board — his chairman Lord Rees-Mogg and Tim Waterstone — have simultaneously thrown in the towel, leaving Christopher more vulnerable to "Struwwelpeter" then ever.

■ *THE SEVEN OR eight men in suits from Price Waterhouse continue to rule the roost at Macdonald. Contrary to sounds emanating from the building, it is increasingly unlikely as the weeks pass that any other publisher will feel inclined to purchase the whole caboodle, including the warehouse at Paulton and 300 staff. Employees are not what publishers need in 1992; they need customers to buy the product.*

An illiterate and unintelligible letter has been sent by the administrators to bemused authors. As a result, managing director Philippa Harrison begged chief man-in-suit A.V. Lomas to let the editors communicate with their authors. They were only allowed to do so on unheaded paper, and Lomas reluctantly coughed up the money so that poor Philippa could buy some postage stamps.

'Bookworm'

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
PLANNER
A TEENAGE GIRL HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH AN OLDER MAN: I DON'T THINK THAT'S TOTALLY ABSURD, DO YOU?
YES
OH. I WAS AFRAID YOU MIGHT SAY THAT.

Terrorism

Bushwhacking

ALL SORTS of things can happen when election year in Britain and the United States coincides — and the most heavily-backed plan for a stunt for 1992 by both the British Foreign Office and the US State Department is another "revenge strike" on Libya.

The excuse for such a strike has already been carefully prepared. It will be "a blow for justice" in retaliation for those killed on Pan-Am flight 103 which crashed over Lockerbie just before Christmas, 1988. In March 1989, for reasons set out by the CIA (and, therefore, promptly by MI5) President George Bush and Margaret Thatcher agreed in a special telephone call to leave Lockerbie alone. Now Bush and Major are re-discovering their outrage at the atrocity, and are determined to bring to justice the two Libyans whom they have named as the planters of the bomb in the plane.

Tam Dalyell, who has upset so many similar plans in the past, told the House of Commons that on 29 March, the Dumfries and Galloway police issued a report entitled *Bombing of Pan-Am 103. Interview of Marwan Abdel Razzaq Mufit Khreesat as a suspect.*

Khreesat is not a Libyan. He was held by the German police after an explosive device in a cassette recorder — similar to the one which is said to have blown up the plane over Lockerbie — was found in his car. The Scottish police's report concluded, not surprisingly: "There can be little doubt that Khreesat is the bomb-maker for the PFDLP-GC (a Palestinian terrorist group) and there is a possibility that he prepared the explosive device which destroyed PA-103. As such he should not be at liberty..."

This was the information which had prompted the then transport secretary Paul Channon on 17 March 1989 (only 12 days before the police report) to announce triumphantly to selected lobby journalists that the Scottish police had tracked down the man who bombed the plane and would be arresting him shortly. Alas, Channon did not know that while he was talking to lobby journalists in the Garrick Club, Thatcher and Bush were agreeing that they should "play down" Lockerbie for fear that their beloved intelligence services would be embarrassed by any prolonged inquiry.

Khreesat therefore remained at liberty, despite increasingly hysterical press reports that he was the bomb-maker. Then suddenly last year the whole emphasis changed. The bombing was played up. The Palestinian and Syrian connections were played down. The entire blame was shifted on to the Libyans.

The Home Office minister Douglas Hogg, who answered Dalyell in the debate on 20 January, had a simple explanation. After 18 months of suspecting Khreesat, the Palestinians and the Syrians, he explained, "the facts of the investigation shifted". Why and how? Hogg replied: "As a result of forensic scientific evidence."

All the forensic evidence was available to the police long before the suspects changed last year. The "shifting facts" story does not stand up for a moment.

Members of the UK Families Flight 103 Group

The "facts" of the police inquiry have remained very much the same since March 1989. They have been passed on again and again to journalists interested in the story. The *Sunday Times*, in an enormous series in December 1989, repeated the whole Khreesat, Syrian, Palestinian, Iranian saga *ad nauseam*. David Leppard's book *On the Trail of Terror* repeated it too.

In December 1990, Leslie Woodhead's long documentary for Granada spelled out in no uncertain terms that the Palestinians had been brought in by the Iranians to bomb the aircraft in revenge for the shooting down of an Iranian airliner by US troops. Woodhead reported that Khreesat, who had made the bomb, had been released by German intelligence who thought he was their agent (though he was working for more than one master). There was no "shift" of facts — the facts remained the same throughout, so what happened to shift the suspects?

The answer has its roots in Malta. The official line (put out by the *Sunday Times*, Leppard and Woodhead, among countless others) was that the suitcase bomb was originally planted on a plane in Malta and that the suitcase was transferred to a jet at Frankfurt and then again on to flight 103 at Heathrow. The plot was hatched, so the story went, in a Maltese bakery.

At some time last year, the official story was further embellished. The people who planted the bomb in Malta, it was said, were agents of the Libyan government who were posing as airline officials. This story was, incidentally (without any publicity in the British or US press), immediately and comprehensively denounced by the Maltese government, whose deputy prime minister said police inquiries in Malta had found no link whatsoever between Malta and the bomb.

What, then, is the evidence which leads the US government, and, in pathetic chorus, the Scottish Lord Advocate and his government in Whitehall to the certainty that the two Libyans are responsible? The answer is that they have a "witness".

In response to the US government's offer of an enormous reward for information about the bombing, an airline official in Malta came forward with a story that the two Libyans planted the bomb. He was whisked off to the United States, given a false identity and paid a rumoured $4 million. This — not forensic evidence or anything so substantial — is the reason for the US and British governments' sudden concern to clear up the Lockerbie bombing, and for their sudden lack of interest in all the suspects it has been pursuing up to now.

The new "evidence", bought at such a fantastic price, convinces lawyers on both sides of the Atlantic that they can convict the Libya Two in a court of law, provided that court is in the US or Britain (the offer by the Maltese government to hold the case in Valetta has been turned down contemptuously).

No one in the US justice department or the Lord Advocate's office expects the Libyans to be released for trial, and their star witness will therefore be spared the embarrassment of cross-examination about his huge pay-off and whether or not it affected his memory. Meanwhile, the consciences of both governments are clear. Though they know that someone else made the Lockerbie bomb, someone connected with their new allies in Syrian and Iran, they can with a clear conscience go for others who are connected to a country which is not their ally.

Meanwhile, UK Families Flight 103, the organisation that represents most of the families bereaved in the Lockerbie disaster, has received a full report from Sir David Napley, the celebrated London solicitor and former president of the Law Society, on the liability in negligence of the Department of Transport for not properly checking the luggage loaded on the plane.

Sir David's reluctant conclusion is that the Department does not owe a duty of care to anyone, even though it signed an international agreement to safeguard airline passengers from disasters such as Lockerbie and flagrantly broke the agreement.

The final paragraph of Sir David's letter is worth quoting on behalf of all those who have ever taken seriously anything ever written or spoken on the subject by transport ministers Channon or Malcolm Rifkind, or from the junior minister who now "handles" Lockerbie, Lord Brabazon of Tara:

Moreover, I think that the Government, were the matter properly publicised, would find themselves in a highly embarrassing position, unless some more positive steps were taken. The situation which reveals itself is that this country, together with a number of other states, has solemnly met together and entered into contractual commitments with one another to ensure that adequate security arrangements are made for the safety of the travelling public against terrorism. It is bad enough in itself that it now appears that, having solemnly agreed to those terms, they are being deliberately ignored, to the knowledge of the Department of Transport. What, however, is even more ludicrous is that that being the situation, there appears, for all practical purposes, to be no means under the legal system in this country under which a citizen can go to the courts and compel a Government Department, in the interests of the safety of passengers, to do that which they had solemnly contracted to do. Were it not that so many tragedies were involved in it, it would be a suitable subject for farce and, in my view, every possible step should be taken to bring this to public knowledge and to force the Department of Transport to honour the commitments into which the Government entered with other states.

Arms News

India goes spare

THINGS are looking up for the merchants of death as Britain's arms manufacturers seem poised to sell more than £1 billion worth of military hardware to India.

Apart from being a big help to Britain, the sale would go some way to resolving the crisis faced by India's armed forces after the break-up of the Soviet Union. The USSR was India's closest ally and, more importantly, her main supplier of defence equipment and spares.

The British Foreign Office, handmaiden to our arms industry, is hustling to grab plum defence contracts in India — in particular for around 100 British Aerospace Hawk trainer jets worth £1 billion-plus.

During his recent visit to New Delhi, Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, said defence deals with India were being "discussed"; under prevailing circumstances that is being interpreted as a euphemism for imminent arms contracts for British firms.

India's army, the world's second largest, her navy and air force are all Soviet-equipped and now face a severe shortage of spare parts. The United States, which has agreed to supply them for limited periods, demands hard currency in contrast to the old rice or consumer goods-for-guns deals struck with the Soviets.

If the spares problem is not solved soon, India's armed forces are likely to be crippled without even being fired at; hence the Indian government's eagerness to turn to the west — in particular to Britain and America.

While India is plagued by a foreign exchange crisis, the liberal economic policies of prime minister P.V. Narashima Rao, who has invited foreign investment, are viewed by some dealers, presently hustling in New Delhi, as a worthwhile punt for the future. Besides, India's peaceful nuclear programme has earned it brownie points with the United States and Britain, in contrast to Pakistan's belligerent nuclear posture, and analysts feel military goodies will follow.

India has long been interested in the Hawk to update its obsolete Soviet and indigenous trainers. The Hawk's competitor, the French Alpha trainer, seems to be out of the reckoning after the French recently agreed to sell 40 Mirage-2000 fighter jets to Pakistan, India's implacable enemy, while the Soviet offer of a souped up MiG-21 is irrelevant.

This is not the first time India — where 40 per cent of people live below the poverty line — has rescued Britain's defence industry. In 1986 she bailed out Westland by buying 21 civilian helicopters for £65 million as part of a British aid package (the choppers were grounded in 1990 after the pilots refused to fly them, deeming them unsafe, and with commercial foresight Westland stopped making them after the Indian deal.) The Indian navy also rescued Westland from closure by buying 20 Sea King helicopters.

Today, with the old Raj ties firmed up by visits to India by Hurd and the Prince and Princess of Wales in the space of six weeks, juicy defence contracts can't be far behind.

Police 5

Tottenham 3, Knacker 0

THE TWO police officers accused of framing Winston Silcott for the murder of PC Keith Blakelock in the Broadwater Farm riots appeared in court last week. Their potential trial promises to be very interesting indeed.

In an initial eight-minute hearing at Bow Street Magistrates' Court, Detective Chief Superintendent Graham Melvin and his sidekick Detective Inspector Maxwell Dingle faced charges of conspiring to pervert the course of justice. Melvin also faces a charge of perjury.

One interesting matter concerns what happened to the original notes of the Silcott interviews. When the forensic tests were run on them on 7 June last year, it was discovered that the final page — signed by three officers, but not by Silcott — had vanished. But in December 1989, the then Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Allan Greene, wrote to the MP for Tottenham, Bernie Grant, guaranteeing that the notes would be kept safe.

At the time Sir Allan issued the assurance, the notes were in the personal custody of chief inspector Patrick Hook in Bromley, an officer apparently unconnected with the Silcott case. He had taken the file home from the police registry "for personal reasons" over the summer. He did not sign it out.

When defence lawyers demanded access to the original papers, Melvin's driver was sent to pick them up from Hook. When the page went walkies, no one knows; but Hook might be an interesting witness at the trial. Melvin has told Essex police that he believes the page was stolen from the top security registry by campaigners for the Tottenham Three.

Of course, the most interesting witnesses of all will be the two accused — if they try to explain the results of the forensic tests on their "record" of the final interview with Silcott. Dingle has so far exercised his right to silence; but Melvin is anxious for the chance to put his side of the story.

Told in full, that story might be fascinating. Everyone knows that he was under enormous pressure to get convictions for the Blakelock murder. But Melvin has hinted darkly to at least one journalist about unspecified "interference from above" in the actual direction of the investigation. Faced with the prospect of prison, his memory might get more specific, and cause some red faces.

The Gentle Touch-up?

ON 16 JANUARY last, 20 illegally produced photocopies of an article from *Eye* 785 were circulated to members of the Murkeyside police authority. Lord Gnome does not take kindly to such flagrant breaches of copyright law, which have deprived him of around £16 in lost revenue.

The members' minds were exercised by our piece about the continuing persecution of assistant chief constable Alison Halford, Britain's most senior policewoman. A growing minority on the MPA are very concerned about how its leading figures have treated her, but the dissidents are forbidden to comment publicly.

Lady Margaret Symie, former MPA chairperson, is under no such constraint. She went on television the following day to denounce the proceedings as "disgusting" and "deeply discredited", alleging that the authority was now "out of control". A *Daily Telegraph* editorial similarly complained about "rank injustice" and decisions made behind closed doors which "bordered on the scandalous".

The main movers against Halford — George Bundred, Harry Rimmer and chief constable Jim Sharples — dislike Halford intensely because of her alleged lesbianism. Rimmer suffers from homophobia for well known family reasons.

Evidence of Bundred's hatred abounds, not least in an affidavit by Neal Taggart, secretary to the Labour group on the police committee of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. He relates the following conversation with Bundred:

"It seemed to me that he clearly had a 'bee in his bonnet' about Miss Halford and his feelings about her were clearly strong. He told me she was a lesbian, that it was bad for discipline and he asked me how I would feel as an experienced police authority member having an officer of ACPO rank in the West Yorkshire force who was lesbian or gay. He put it in such a way as to demand an answer.

"My response was that I would not have any objection to any police officer having any legal sexual relationship, provided they were doing their job properly... I told George Bundred... that I knew of an officer of ACPO rank who had had a number of sexual relationships with women, whilst married himself, but who was nonetheless a very good police officer who had won further promotion.

"At this point, George Bundred made reference to Miss Halford's legal representation in connection with her claim for sexual discrimination. George Bundred complained that the wife of a deputy chief constable was representing Alison Halford in her claim. I said that what partners in a marriage did in their careers was up to them, and that it was wrong for one partner to try and influence another in that respect...

"Bundred then went on to say that because Elizabeth Whitehouse was acting for Alison halford, Paul Whitehouse, the deputy chief constable, would go no further in his career, adding that he had it 'on the highest authority from within the Home Office' that that would be so."

Horrific conversations with Bundred like this have been recounted by several other Labour councillors as George holds forth on his pet hate, usually after consuming a couple of scotches. His views are certainly a long way from the rights charter about to be adopted by the Metropolitan police. This makes discrimination and harassment of gay officers "a serious disciplinary offence".

To the initial charges concerning the alleged swimming pool incident, Bundred and his two chums have added abusive phone calls that Halford was supposed to have made when she heard they were continuing the disciplinary action. The lack of confidentiality surrounding the whole episode has reduced it to a farce. It no longer carries with it "the smell of unfairness" but the ripe rotten stink of municipal corruption.

Brussels Sprouts

Sick audit gloria mundi

WHILE EVERYONE knows that those who run the European Community are rampantly profligate with our money, the latest report by the European Court of Auditors shows how impossible it is to find out exactly how profligate.

Our Euro civil servants, the mainstay of the three Eurobodies, have sought every possible way to spend taxpayers' money — but without appearing to have spent any at all.

Take the European Parliament. While checking its inventory of equipment, auditors found that 17,000 of the 84,000 officially-listed items of office, technical and computing gear, including furniture and accessories, had vanished.

Six months later, the Euro civil servants had managed to trace 6,000 items so that only 11,821 were missing. The ingenious Euroservants then covered up for all possible discrepancies: they set the lower value limit for inventory listings at 75 ECUs — and wrote down the value of all the missing items as *less* than 75 ECUs apiece, whatever their value, so they all "disappeared".

Next, the auditors focused on the accounting system of the parliament, allegedly controlled by two computer systems, LogaBax and SIRC. To their surprise, they found LogaBax terminals all over the parliament's offices within easy access of anyone wishing to manipulate data files.

As a result the financial controller had great difficulty finding what Euromoney had been spent, by whom, where, when and how, and even how much Euromoney there was in the first place. The auditors observed drily: "There are several weaknesses in the Logabox and SIRC computer systems."

Again, however, our Euroservants covered up for all possible eventualities: they kept double sets of old-fashioned accounting books so the financial controller could see where all the money had gone. The disadvantage was that inquiries took at least three months to answer.

This versatile system also had the unique advantage of enabling Euroclerks to adjust the figures on MEPs' expenses to allow for the arduous travel and accommodation claims they incur. Such financial flexibility reached its peak with regard to urgent [*sic*] MEP business, funded through a special account called the Imprest Account. The Eurocrats managed to extract 28.8 million ECUs from it in a year, even though the official limit was 2.5 million ECUs.

To try to sort out the problem, European Parliament officials spent 2.5 million ECUs hiring contractors, sub-contractors and consultants to prepare for a new system called BUDG. After a series of failures, BUDG collapsed and the parliament sued the contractors last April.

The financial losses resulting from this lack of managerial control over European Community funds were so enormous the auditors found them impossible to calculate.

Not to be outdone, the staff of the Council of Ministers hired computing and data processing equipment at a cost estimated by the auditors to be *76 percent* greater than the normal cost of buying it. The council also adopted a curious new system for developing "state of the art information technology" with two new development groups, the "New Technology Division" and the "Data Processing Unit", each of which operated independently and spent whatever it liked. The auditors noted that this curious system was of no practical use to anyone.

The audit of the European Commission was yet more circumspect. Its wide-ranging activities should have been controlled by the directorate for the administration of delegations and information offices (aptly named DAD). However, the eagle-eyed observers noted that poor old DAD hadn't enough data or information to control diddly, so large amounts of information were unobtainable or nonexistent, making checks pointless.

DAD was also unable to specify the maximum amounts of money needed for urgent expense accounts (Imprest) for delegations, so that some, like the commission's development delegation, mistakenly billed itself for 316 cars for just 184 employees.

Even staff and property transferred to the commission from the dismantled European Association for Cooperation were hard to identify with DAD. As a last resort, the auditors applied to the commission's computerised stock control system, at its information directorate, to see what equipment was in place at which sites. Even this proved grossly inadequate. Almost half the equipment listed on the sites of one randomly picked directorate had disappeared, and a third had gone from one of the others.

Further checks to find the exact amount and location of the commission's computer equipment proved equally fruitless since the commission kept three different stock control inventories on three separate computer systems, none of which interfaced with any other.

'The European'

In the City

JUST HOW realistic the proposed staff buyout of Mirror Group Newspapers is, despite the arrival as chairman of Sir Peter Parker, remains very much a matter of debate, both inside and outside *Mirror* headquarters.

For one thing it seems the Parker-led would-be consortium has so far only managed to collect sympathisers rather than investors. Apart from Parker, his friend Michael Stoddard's Electra group and *Daily Mirror* editor Richard Stott there are no formal members. Furthermore, no one has yet put up any money.

Perhaps this is not altogether surprising given that no one can yet calculate the depth of the black holes left by Cap'n Bob, the £97 million loaned to Maxwell companies and the £350 million missing from the pension funds. That is why no one else has rushed in and Pearson and Mercury Asset Management have dropped out.

Just how long it will take to calculate what the *Mirror* papers are worth is one more uncertainty, and such uncertainties make financing a buy-out a non-starter. Those putting up the cash want to know what security they have for their money, what the right price should be and what are the liabilities.

One other little uncertainty is whether or not the buyers of MGN have a legal liability to compensate for Maxwell's pillaging of the pension fund. There are lawyers who say no such liability exists. It is merely a goodwill gesture to present employees and future pensioners. Even MGN's lawyers appear unable to give a clear opinion. If there is no liability, the price is very different to what is required if the fund has to be topped up.

Clearly it would be rather difficult for the Stott/Parker buy-out to overlook the little matter of the pension fund. But that could demand a higher price than the backers may want to finance. Maybe that is why Parker is talking about making good the pension losses over 10 years.

Meanwhile MGN staff and pensioners should not overlook Parker's failure last year to raise the money for the first national commercial radio station after winning the franchise. That involved considerably less than MGN will cost.

THE MORE that emerges about the share support operation for Maxwell Communication, the less credible are the claims by US investment bankers Goldman Sachs that they were duped and did not realise Cap'n Bob was behind the buying.

Who else did they think wanted millions of MCC shares that others were so hot to unload? Why should little-known buyers in Liechtenstein and Switzerland be so keen on MCC? How were these multi-million purchases — the total cost of the illegal support operation could reach £400 million — being financed by such unknown players?

Once again the answer seems to be that Goldman and the other brokers who handled this lucrative business only heard what they wanted to hear. So long as the buyers did not admit they were acting for Maxwell, all was well. But then what else were these offshore stooges going to say? And how hard did Goldman press beyond the perfunctory denials which could be filed in case of future queries? As to believing Maxwell's denials of any connection — well, he would, wouldn't he.

Goldman made millions out of dealing for Maxwell in MCC shares and lending him money. Who else did they think was going to buy the further 30 million MCC shares they accumulated after buying the "put" option from him on 15.6 million shares in November 1990?

As the SFO proceeds down the share support trail, it will be interesting to see how Goldman's Eric Sheinberg justifies such un-Wall Street naiveté and what internal documents show as to what Goldman knew or suspected. Certainly those banks left holding worthless MCC shares are eager to find out.

FROM beyond the grave Cap'n Bob may reach out to drag down not only sons Kevin and Ian and other little helpers, but certain City suits who thought they had his number. There is growing speculation about the position of "Sir" Michael Richardson who, as chairman of Smith New Court, converted Maxwell's old enemy, merchant bankers N.M. Rothschild, into a seeming supporter. That embarrassment, plus the gutless Smith tactic of privately warning certain influential clients off MCC while continuing to support Maxwell publicly, may not have gone down too well with the Rothschild grandees.

THE silence from the Blue Arrow trial at the Old Bailey looks like it could be lucky for some.

THE Serious Fraud Office, after making initial inquiries and taking witness statements, is expected not to pursue the question of any deception arising out of Brent Walker's £102 convertible bond issue in November 1990. The investigation is now concentrating on the mystery surrounding two payments totalling £12.5 million made by the company in 1989.

George "The Accused" Walker and his ex-finance director Wilfred Aquilina are likely to be asked about exactly what happened to the £5 million supposedly paid as commissions to Walker's Paris-based associate Michael Eland and £7.5 million paid into an Arab Banking Corporation account in New York. Eland has denied receiving the money, saying that his signature was forged. ABC, by coincidence, was a lender to both the company and Walker personally. Walker denies knowing anything about the payments.

AFTER seeing profits collapse, Granada shareholders would be forgiven for asking at the upcoming annual meeting why the company should be so generous to director David Plowright when things are tough all over for everyone else.

Plowright last year finally exercised a long-standing (pre-1981) option to acquire his modest bijou country mansion in a highly desirable part of Cheshire from Granada. He paid £81,153 — Granada's cost price — against a valuation of £425,000.

The option had been granted by the Granada TV subsidiary (chairman D. Plowright) to well-known Labour supporter Plowright before he joined the Granada main board in 1981. This was for "better performance of his duties", given that he had to commute between the TV studios in Manchester and Granada's headquarters in London. All Plowright — is the response "these are workers' homes"? — had to do was to contribute to the outgoings, presumably pay the rent, utilities and poll tax.

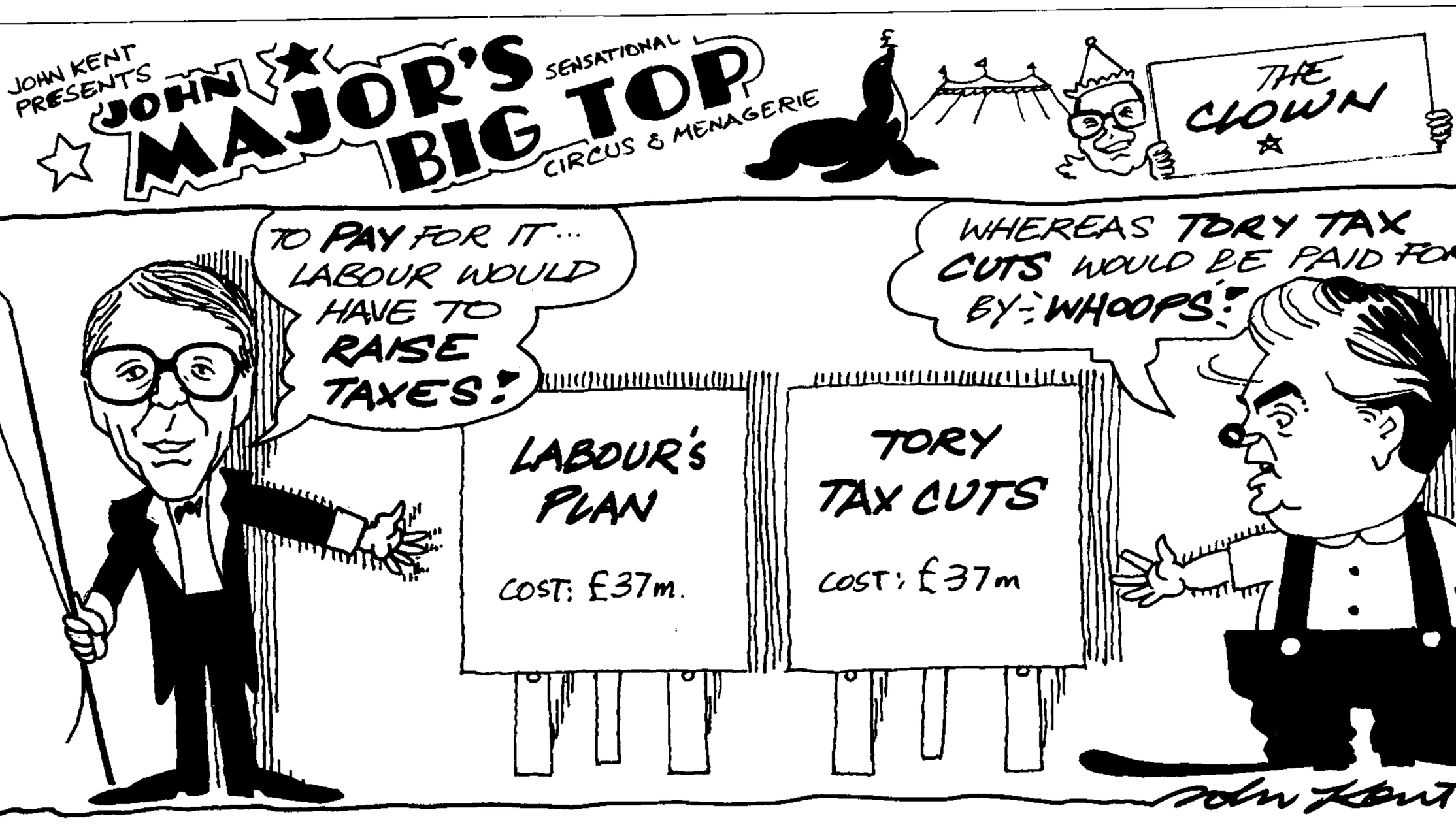
The value of the five-bedroomed *pied à terre* had escalated from £225,000 in 1987 to £425,000 by 1990. During that time the cost to GTV, and therefore Plowright if he bought, rose by precisely £153. Just how much it was worth in mid-1991 when "Pug" exercised the option is not stated: the valuation of September 1990 was used. Possibly a little less given the recession, but still a bargain.

What newer shareholders might ask is whether this arrangement, although regularly disclosed, was ever given their approval; what exactly Plowright paid to GTV for the use of his country retreat; whether any other GTV executives have or have had such profitable perks (the word in Manchester is yes) and why the company should give away assets at such a cheap price, whatever the pre-existing legal arrangements. Granada also paid sacked chief executive Derek Lewis £579,000 to go despite his being the architect of disastrous policies.

Veteran Granada watchers will recall the scheme years ago whereby certain executives were to have been given the right to buy shares in the TV subsidiary at a highly advantageous price. This scheme had to be withdrawn when shareholders rebelled.

Looks like a case for *World in Action*. Or maybe not.

'Slicker'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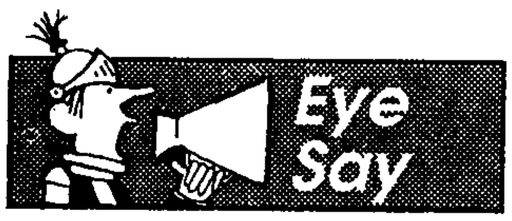

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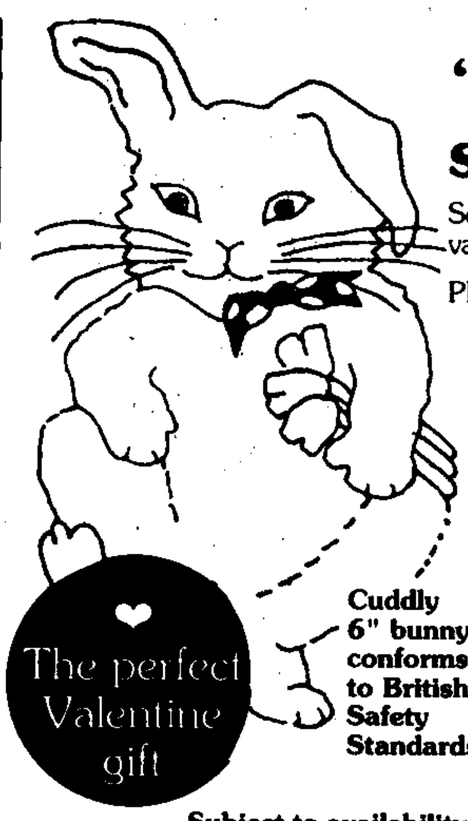

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CLUE 10: While West Yorkshire Chief Constable Gregory was prepared to wipe the slate clean, the Lancashire police correctly wouldn't accept Sutcliffe's "confessions" because he didn't fit the frame for their murder in Preston. "The Real Yorkshire Ripper Revealed", £5.00, NOEL O'GARA, Ballinahowen, Athlone, Ireland.

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GRANDCHILDREN OF Albion anthology poets reading/signings Thurs 20 Feb Countryside Bkshop, 39 Goodge St W1 from 6-8 Attila the Stockbroker/M. Horovitz & Thurs 27 Feb Waterstones Bkshop Charing X Rd, 7.30-9.30. J. Agard/C.A. Duffy/Michele Robts ++ both FREE (GofA book £9.99).

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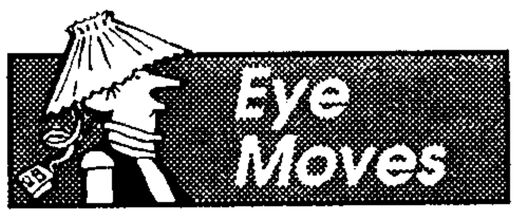

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FAR FROM PERFECT country man, 34, enjoys walks, meals, animals, conversation. Seeks woman, romance, friendship. Shropshire. Will travel. Sense of humour essential. Box 4286.

SLIM MALE, 38, 6 ft, not bald, kind and skilful, seeks discreet, passionate affaire with female, married or not. Day or night. East Anglia. Box 4386.

DISGUSTINGLY DECREPIT, senile, emasculated old man, seeks correspondence. Attractive, nubile young lady with CSE in sock darning to debate Cromagnon Man and Nuclear Fusion. Box 4486.

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LEGGY LADY, (31) likes long letters, literature, laughs, loves lengthy lyrical legato love affairs. (Newcastle. Fun first, more later?) Box 4686.

OXFORD, INDEPENDENT businessman, 6'2", 13-stone, young looking, active, affectionate, attractive, 46, seeks fun-loving, serious, warm, slender lady. Box 4786.

SUCCESSFUL, LIVELY, academic, early 40s, in dull, stable marriage, seeks gorgeous married lady in similar circumstance for exciting, discreet relationship, North London. Letter/photo appreciated. Box 4886.

DALE COOPER, 24, seeks Annie Blackburn, 20-30. North West. Box 4986.

TALL, LIVELY, single 40s, successful, professional, educated, new man desired by similar woman. Must love swimming and dancing. Londonish. Box 2986.

GRADUATE, 34, belatedly seeks Mrs Robinson for Central London affair. Discretion sought and assured. Box 5186.

MIDLANDS. Professional, 36, humorous, sensuous, romantic, good listener, seeks relationship with lady who needs to feel wanted. Married/unmarried. Daytimes/evenings? Box 5286.

HANDSOME, SINCERE, articulate, wealthy man, single, 42, seeks gorgeous lady in the London area, attached or unattached, for a delicious, discreet or indiscreet relationship. Photo/letter/tel. no. please. ALA. Box 5386.

TALL, DARK, handsome, rich, 36, seeks any female well rounded, 20-30, who will accept alternative N/S veg runner. 5'7", 42, ALA. Box 5486.

NICE 60+ manfriend needed for my small, attractive, independent mum. Likes opera, reading, TV, dogwalking, cooking, Times crossword. Gloucestershire area. Photo appreciated. All letters answered. Box 5586.

MAN, 46, affectionate, reliable assertive, humorous, own business; enjoys arts, culture, outdoors, nature, smoking, closeness. Seeks joint happiness (eventual marriage?) with: small, slim, compatible female smoker who likes being cuddled. Photo please ensures response. London-ish or SE. Box 1785.

HANDSOME, SLIM, 6ft English male doctor, single. Chronologically 40, biologically 20. Would like to meet professional lady from Indian sub-continent. Appreciates photo. Box 5685.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE,
39, W1 single, clever, feminine, romantic. Desires a very special, very successful male for a passionate fun relationship. Phone, discretion assured.
Box 3186.

GOOD LOOKING, articulate, professional, semi-detached businessman, 45, Central London, seeks similar lady, 35-45, to explore (discreetly!) new horizons. Box 8286.

MALE, 30, 5'11", single with all the usual attributes of people who advertise here, i.e. wealthy, romantic, charming, handsome, full of shit, own house, BMW, speed boat... the list goes on! I would love to meet a slim, attractive, romantic lady, 25-30, non-smoker with the ability to have fun. If you are wondering how many of the above attributes are bull and how many are merely shit, then drop me a line enclosing photo and I guarantee a rather less garbled reply than this ad. Yorks/Lancs/Cumbria. Box 5686.

ATTRACTIVE, professional, Manchester man, divorced, 40, seeks slim, wicked lady, 30-45, to enjoy life outdoors as well as indoors. Box 5876.

IF YOU ARE female, witty and have a positive outlook on life, write to me. I'm a 24 year old student and promise to reply. Box 5886.

EXPERIENCED, handsome mid-life company director, bored Hereford. Wishes to share discreet, diverse, mutual pleasures with discerning female any age. Box 5986.

UNSUCCESSFUL WRITER, 29, male, South London graduate, likes arts, conversation, country. Works part-time, seeks female under 35. Box 6086.

ATTRACTIVE(ISH) grad, 27, trying hard to avoid becoming a workaholic. Any nice young(ish) lady like to help out? North West/Manchester. Box 6186.

IMMATURE LAZY, witty, passably attractive female, 41, wants tall, amiable chap for laughs. Box 6286.

BUSY, PROFESSIONAL, married, fair, 30s, seeks well-disposed woman — time out. W. Yorks. Box 6386.

TALL, SLIM, handsome, affluent male, 36, totally discreet, seeks attractive, sophisticated, unfulfilled lady for sparkling affair, distance unimportant. Photo please. Box 6486.

LONDON LAWYER (42) seeks sexy lady for steamy relationship. Phone 081-444 8950 (evenings) 071-722 1560 (daytime).

WELL-TRAVELLED, intellectual American banker, mid-forties, with wit, charm and sex appeal, but utterly impossible, seeks strong-minded, independent, interesting, attractive, 25-40 year old, who'll take no shit, for permanent relationship. Photograph appreciated. Box 6586.

ARE THERE ANY real bastards out there? Last lot were wimps. Exciting mid-40s, stimulating brunette, expensive tastes, loves surf and turf, seeks short-term challenge to turn into long-term equal. W. Sussex. Box 6686.

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PROFESSIONAL, MARRIED male, past 40, dreamed to meet artistically or intellectually inclined female/s before life slips away. Box 6886.

UNAPPRECIATED husband, 45, slim, lively and professional seeks female counterpart for companionship. London. Box 6986.

WISTFUL WOMAN, 30, still wisting... slim, quiet, blonde seeking London professional (long term) address? Box 7086.

LOVELY LISSOME blonde, 37 (Surrey) seeks unfettered genuine solvent male to make her 1992 dreams come true. No timewasters/commitmentphobiles. Box 7186.

ATTRACTIVE N/S male graduate at end of marriage seeks understanding female (35-45) for mutual pleasure. Manchester area. Box 7286.

MALE MECHANICAL engineer, 30, feeling the pace of an MBA, looks forward to getting married when it's all over. Everything sorted but the right girl. If you're gorgeous, monogamous, intelligent and virginal (any 3 from 4) I promise you won't be disappointed. Manchester. Box 7386.

ELIGIBLE BUT slightly eccentric bachelor, professional, solvent, 37, 6ft, interests include classic cars, sailing, theatre, countryside, seeks attractive lady, under 40, to share life and love in London and Salisbury. Box 7486.

EXCEPTIONALLY HANDSOME, upmarket, educated, warm, amusing, very safely married merchant banker, 43, seeks relationship with genuinely attractive, safely married female. London. Box 8086.

SCOTLAND CENTRAL Belt. Where is that tall, slim, sensuous, female professional, 25-40, out there who would relish very discreet evenings and more chez fellow male professional in 50s. Dare is reply with phone no. and photo. Box 8186.

ATHLETIC MILLIONAIRE, presentable (50s) seeks stunning Nordic Cinderella. S.O.H. Photo. A.L.A. Box 8886.

DIVA JULES seeks Cynthia Hawkins and/or the rollerskating Vietnamese girl. Box 5086.

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SPORTY, SUCCESSFUL male, 46, seeks occasional discreet night/daytime frolics with likeminded female. London. Confidential. Box 8986.

WOUNDED TOM, 35, smallish, slightly shy, solvent, seeks solace in sensuous soulmate, 25-40. Central Scotland. ALA. Box 9586.

CALLING CAPTAIN Kirk. Heavenly body seeks space hero (29-39) for intergalactic adventure. Beam me up Scottie. Coordinates SU760710. Box 9186.

TWO COMPANY directors, mid 30s, are looking for two females to accompany them to the winter Olympics in France on the 14th February for one week. Must be fun-loving and into skiing. 0494-678781. Reference RT.

MONOSYLLABIC bearded type, 27, tall, dark, amiable, seeks slim, nubile, cosmopolitan blonde (under-)graduette for travel, adventure and fun. Photo appreciated. Box 9286.

LOVELY LADY lawyer, 42, seeks love and affection. Edinburgh. Box 9386.

GOODLOOKING, successful, assertive gentleman with own business, aged 39, seeking goodlooking lady companion with excellent figure, aged under 35 for a fun one-to-one relationship who wishes to enjoy a luxurious lifestyle. Photo and phone number please. Box 9486.

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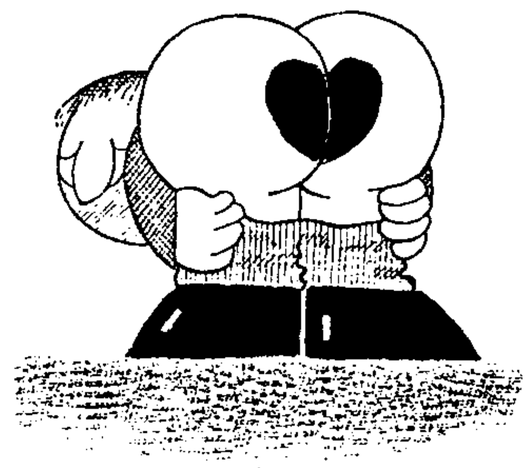

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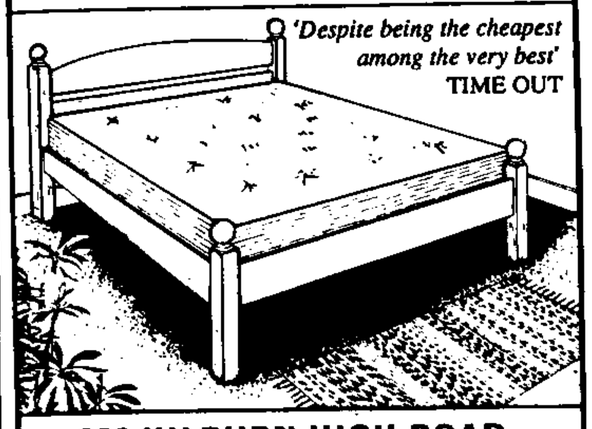

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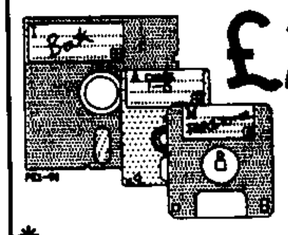

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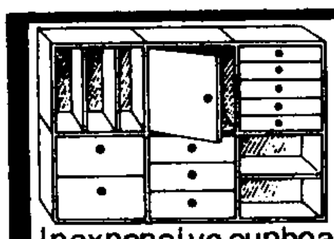

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